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INDIAN JUNGLE LORE AND THE RIFLE

INDIAN
JUNGLE LORE
AND
THE RIFLE

Being Notes on Shikar and Wild Animal Life

By
“SILVER HACKLE”

Author of
“*Man-eaters and other Denizens of the Indian Jungle*”

With 38 illustrations from photographs
and reproductions of the author's sketches

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To the Memory of
a true and good sportsman, in every
sense of the word, both with the
spear and the rifle, this work is
respectfully dedicated by his son
the Author

INTRODUCTION.

THE existing literature on the wild fauna of India, for the most part, comes under only two categories—either Natural History, or mere recitals of shooting adventures—and I think there is still room and need for a work that gives in concise form a general and practical description of the ways and habits of these animals and the methods employed or advocated in their pursuit by sportsmen in the country. There are valuable books on Natural History by able and competent authors, but these are generally looked upon only as books of reference, whilst equally well written anecdotes of shikar, though deeply interesting, are rarely read through more than once. It is my endeavour to lay before the average reader, more especially before him who uses the rifle, a book that I trust may be interesting and of some practical help when in quest of sport in the jungles, and one from which he may glean some knowledge of the ways of wild animals, and the best way to secure the trophies they offer.

I should be expecting too much to have my ideas and views, in their entirety, accepted by all sportsmen, but yet, after twenty-five years spent in shooting—off and on—in most parts of the country, I can scarcely be accused of forming opinions that are hasty or not well founded on personal experiences and observations. Even at the expense of being considered dogmatic, I must ask the reader to understand that, in a work of this description, statements have to be made and methods advocated, some of which may perhaps not be in agreement with the opinions and ideas of other sportsmen—very possibly more successful than the writer.

In a vast sub-continent like India, conditions under which wild animals live in different parts must vary just as much as, we shall say, the climate; and for a sportsman

to class as inaccurate any descriptions of wild animal life which may be given by another, simply because it happens to be at variance with his own cherished beliefs and opinions, can hardly be just criticism, and is far from encouraging towards the expression of views and opinions which all help towards our obtaining as much information as possible of the grand sport which lies at our doors. To avoid controversial matter seems altogether an impossibility, but on the other hand, a book on such a controversial subject as shikar would be colourless and written to no purpose were its author to express only popular beliefs and opinions, however erroneous they may appear to him. For instance, an expression of opinion as regards the best battery for a sportsman to provide himself with, will possibly run counter to the convictions of others. Each and all have every right to their own ideas on the subject; experience has to be paid for, and is after all the safest and only guide. I think, however, I should be failing in my regard for the safety of any new hand at the game, if I did not advise him to avoid small bore magazine rifles when after dangerous game. Putting it in as few words as possible, I 'duld say to him "Use as heavy a bore as you can stand up to and handle easily, whether it is a heavy high velocity or a powerful Paradox, firing cordite."

To lay down any hard and fast rule as to the conducting of a beat, when conditions are never the same in any two beats, or to state that all chital throughout India carry shootable heads from the 1st February, is to make assertions that cannot be accepted as always accurate. The jungles along the foot of the Himalayas differ greatly from those in South India, and consequently the wild fauna in the latter tract of country, adapting themselves to their particular surroundings, differ in some measure, as regards habits and also temperament, from that of the Northern jungles. The Naturalist has concrete matter to write on, when he confines himself to such subjects as anatomy and osteology, but even he treads on dangerously controversial ground no sooner he starts on descriptions of animals and their habits. So I can hardly expect to escape adverse criticism from some

of my brother sportsmen, and therefore ask such as I am not in agreement with to read what I have written in the spirit in which it is meant.

This work treats only of the animals found in the jungles that, here and there, clothe the plains and lower hills of India from the Himalayas to Mysore, and I have found the most convenient way of grouping them is to take the carnivora first and to follow on with those animals that form the natural prey of the carnivora. The lion, rhinoceros and buffalo, with the elephant, are the only big game that do not find a place in this work, for though I have shot the three former in Africa, I have had no personal experience of the Indian varieties, and therefore do not presume to give any first hand information regarding them.

The game of the country, in spite of laws for its protection, is fast decreasing in numbers, and none but the sportsman knows how rapidly this is the case. The spread of cultivation and the increase of population are chiefly responsible for this, but poaching by native shikaris is almost as important a factor to be taken into account when weighing the question. The cheap gun licenses, so liberally issued by Government for the ostensible purpose of crop protection, are, I am afraid, universally abused. The official whose work occasionally takes him into jungle tracts is deluded into the belief that these weapons are seldom used, because during his stay the nights have not been disturbed by the reports of guns. No sooner is his back turned, than Roop Singh, Hasan and others, every one of them a possessor of a gun license for the protection of crops, bring out their weapons and proceed to sit up over every game path or pool of water in the locality, quite ignoring their crops, which already enjoy immunity from damage since the potting over, long ago, of the last doe that used to visit them.

I might well be asked to suggest a remedy for this state of affairs. Well, I am of opinion that a close and searching personal investigation as to the necessity for every such weapon by a trustworthy subordinate official should

be called for before the issue of the license; and any connivance or sympathy with poaching on the part of such subordinate officials should be punishable with dismissal. Half measures can only be abortive; either enforce the laws, or chuck the whole thing, and let the game look after itself. The preservation of game, where it does not interfere with the advance of cultivation and civilization, should be almost as urgent a concern to every Government as the conservation of its forests, and suitable game laws should be framed that are just and do not press too heavily on those that seek sport in the proper spirit. The rules now in force are generally satisfactory in theory only, for in practice the subordinate guardians of these game laws seem to think that they are framed to harass and annoy all those, whether European or Indian who shoot for sport alone and feel themselves in honour bound to respect the rules. These subordinates often make themselves an unmitigated nuisance by dogging the footsteps of the sportsman, whilst their friends have the free run of the jungles at the bare expense of the powder and shot they use and the pieces of meat they give to these over-zealous guardians of the game, that year in and year out they are steadily reducing in numbers.

The Government of Kenya Colony is far-sighted enough to know that the game, which at present roams over its veldts in their thousands, cannot last, and will meet the same fate as that of parts of South Africa, unless the game laws are rigidly enforced. It is deaf to all representations of those of its white settlers who assert the game laws of the country are too severe; it continues to appoint Honorary Game Wardens who conscientiously carry out their duties, and the Government does not shirk the prosecution of all or any who infringe these laws. Conditions may certainly not be the same as they are in India, but yet there is no doubt that the game of the country is there for sport alone, and not for all and sundry to slaughter. It is hard to understand why the prayer of a villager for a gun license for the protection of his crop is so readily granted, when everyone knows that the small

and very cheap detonating bombs, procurable in every bazaar, are just as effective in scaring away game from the crops.

India's fauna is not far behind that of Africa in general interest, and though it may be harder to wipe out, it will be a cruel shame should it be reduced to such an extent as to no longer form an attraction and afford a healthy recreation in its chase to the man who gives the best years of his life to the country.

I lay no claim to be a mighty Nimrod, with a list of slain rivalling those of the great sportsmen of the good old days, who bagged their three and four tigers before breakfast, but only one who endeavours to impart some of the knowledge of the ways and habits of wild animals that he has gained during his rambles in Nature's wild and often beautiful places. Unlike those who shoot with the intention of putting their experiences on paper, I never carried a camera with me in the jungles until only very recently, when I was persuaded by my wife and many friends to add to the already large number of books on sport. I feel I have lost many opportunities of obtaining some unique pictures, and know that drawings, however good they may be, cannot as truly and satisfactorily convey the impressions desired, of their subjects and surroundings, as would photographs.

Shooting experiences have been included with the double object of making the book more interesting and readable, and to confirm the utility of different methods that have been advocated for adoption after various game. A certain amount of dry-as-dust reading, I am afraid, must creep into a work of this description, and to further lighten it up I have added two romances that I have pieced together on various superstitions and tales unfolded by different native shikaris.

I am quite aware of its many shortcomings, and only ask the reader to be tolerant in his opinion of the text and illustrations of this attempt to give him an interesting and true picture of the jungle and its wild inhabitants. I have not hesitated to quote, extensively where necessary, from

"Man-eaters and other Denizens of the Indian Jungle," as the book was welcomed by the general reading public, besides being favourably reviewed by the leading papers of the country. These extracts have been used as I find I cannot improve on them to faithfully depict certain traits and incidents in the lives of these same animals, mentioned in the present work.

"SILVER HACKLE."

15th January, 1929.

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The author is pleased to acknowledge the assistance given him in the illustration of this work by Messrs. Van Ingen & Van Ingen, of Mysore. Out of a number of very interesting tiger photographs, loaned by this obliging firm of taxidermists, the picture in the frontispiece and “A dexterous climber in the Mysore Zoo” have been selected and used, and two others copied in black and white as headpieces for chapters.

“SILVER HACKLE.”



Frontispiece]

"Waiting for Dusk"



CHAPTER I.

THE TIGER (*Felis Tigris*).

GENERAL DESCRIPTION, TEMPERAMENT AND HABITS.

Hindi, *Bagh, Sher.*

Telegu and Tamil, *Puli.*
Canarese, *Huli.*

The description of *Felis Tigris* from a purely scientific or naturalist's point of view, interesting though it may be, is not quite enough to give the average reader any practical knowledge of the ways and habits of the animal, and is very different reading to the description likely to be given by the man who lays himself out to circumvent the most cunning and elusive of the Indian felidæ. I take it that most people want to know more about the animal than can be gleaned from such facts, common in books of natural history, as that, the tiger has only one true molar on each

side of the jaw, has retractile claws and a few other such interesting items; so I shall do my best to give a few just as interesting points as regards traits, habits, etc., of this, the most sought-after specimen of the big and dangerous game of the Indian jungle, and recommend such men as wish to study the osteology and anatomy of the tiger to look up any one of the numerous books on natural history he may be able to get hold of. Beyond a very elementary knowledge of natural history, I can only cater for the reader who wants to have a sound and practical idea of the life, temperament and habits of this and other animals, and trust the observations and experiences recorded herein, may be of use to him when seeking the trophies they offer.

The tiger is found throughout the Indian Peninsula, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin; being plentiful or scarce according to the distribution of the big forests or scrub jungles in the country. The advance of civilization and cultivation is steadily and surely restricting the area it inhabits, but, fortunately for the animal, there are still vast tracts which, due either to the configuration of the country or unhealthy climate, will never be quite opened out; so one may expect *Felis Tigris* to continue to afford the cream of sport to future generations. It is not likely he will ever be seriously incommoded by a shortage of food, as so long as the millions of cattle, in which India is so rich, exist, enough of them will be taken into the forests for grazing to allow of the tiger taking an adequate toll, even should the cervidæ, which are his natural prey, become scarce. Though in course of time he may find the horrible tubers, that deal out death to him and the other inhabitants of the forests, will have largely increased in numbers, yet he will learn to accommodate himself to the altered circumstances and exercise his instinctive cunning and caution to even a greater extent than he does now; so it will be a very long time, let us hope, before he and his kind are wiped out.

All naturalists are of the opinion that there is only one species of tiger, and I think most sportsmen will agree

with them, though the majority may be inclined to divide the species, and I think rightly, into two or more varieties; such varieties generally depending on the different habits or habitats of the animal. There is not much doubt that the tiger which inhabits mountainous and hilly tracts is generally a smaller and thicker set animal than he of the flat grass jungles, or the tiger that confines himself solely to game-killing is a more active and smaller animal than the lazy and big cattle-lifter. This division into varieties is helpful and convenient, and is only in consonance with the ordinary laws of nature. The man who shoots can generally tell from the nature of the jungles around him as to which kind of tiger he is up against, and I feel sure he would be greatly astonished to find his purely game-killer turn out to be a regular monster of a tiger. There may be exceptions to the rule, but, on the whole, so long as the main point of there being only one species is admitted, for practical purposes there can be no harm in recognizing the different varieties of the animal.

Captain Forsyth, a very observant sportsman, says native shikaris recognize two kinds—the *Lodhia Bagh* and the *Oontia Bagh*, the former the game-killer and the latter the cattle-lifter. The *Lodhia Bagh*, he says “Is a light made beast, very active and enduring, and from this, as well as his shyness, generally difficult to bag.” Then of the cattle-lifter he writes “The cattle-lifter again, is usually an older and heavier animal (called *Oontia Bagh*, from its faintly striped coat, resembling the colour of the camel), very fleshy and indisposed to severe exertion.” Though I gather from Sterndale’s writings that he does not hold with Forsyth in his division of these varieties, yet my own experiences and observations have made me adopt the latter’s classification, as I think there is a deal of common sense to back it.

Tigers differ individually in temperament quite as much as they do in colouring and build, for no two of any variety agree with each other in all points. Native shikaris, or for the matter of that, all jungle dwellers, who come constantly in contact with the tiger in his natural state.

soon come to recognize the particular characteristics and temperament of each tiger in the neighbouring jungles, and will tell you that such and such a beast is quite harmless and retreats on the approach of a child, while another tiger is surly and morose and resents man's intrusion in his haunts, whilst yet another is gifted with marvellous cunning and an arrant coward at heart. In certain tracts it is quite a common occurrence for a herdsman to rush up and rescue one of his herd from the very jaws of a tiger without coming to harm, and, strange as it may appear, the feat is not looked upon as anything out of the ordinary; the villagers in time becoming so used to the presence of such a tiger in their jungles as to look upon him as only one of those ills of life that cannot be cured and so must be endured. Treating him with the utmost contempt and disdain, they will in their usual apathetic manner continue for many years to submissively pay the heavy toll he demands from their herds. Not putting themselves out in the least bit, they will often show great reluctance in rendering any help, in the way of information as to the tiger's whereabouts and usual runs, to the sportsman who may have come round with the express purpose of relieving them of their troublesome and exacting parasite.

Without the willing and loyal help of the villagers, especially that of the cowherd and local shikari, the sportsman finds his task of locating and bagging the tiger appreciably harder and longer, and sometimes finds it difficult to discover even the existence of such a tiger due to the extraordinary and unaccountable apathy, already mentioned, of the villagers. Extraordinary as it may appear, there are undoubtedly some villages whose inhabitants would really be sorry to have the tiger they have known for so many years, and at whose hands they have suffered great losses in the way of cattle, harassed or killed by an European sportsman. There are many reasons for this curious behaviour, such as the common belief amongst many of the jungle inhabitants, that the spirit of the dead tiger will haunt those that have been instrumental in his death; likening him in this respect to the common domestic cat on

whose back the goddess, who looks after children, is said to always ride, and the killing of which beast, they assert, calls down the wrath of the goddess on the children of its slayer.

Any sportsman, who knows the vernaculars and has much to do with native shikaris, becomes in time conversant with many of their superstitions, legends and beliefs. The jungle folk have a firm belief that the spirit of the victim of a man-eating tiger rides about at night on the forehead of its slayer and warns the animal of the approach of danger. Captain Forsyth, whose work took him a great deal among the aboriginal tribes of Central India, gives a very uncanny though interesting story, told him by his shikari, of how a man-eater, returning to his human "kill," was warned of danger by the corpse lifting its hand and pointing towards a tree in which another shikari was hidden, with the intention of shooting him.

Taken as a whole, most tigers will retreat before man, especially during the day-time, and there is very little to be feared from one if met with accidentally, so long as he is not molested. Were the animal as ferocious and given to attack as the tiger of our childhood's imagination, life in forest tracts would be utterly impossible, as man is no match unarmed against the marvellous cunning and stealth of this big cat. Fortunately man-eaters are far from common, as a single tiger whose tastes lean towards human flesh, has been known to depopulate large stretches of country; big villages close to a forest holding a man-eater are often deserted, the people taking up their quarters in other villages out of reach of the animal. Highways are sometimes held up by a man-eating tiger, and communications between the different villages in such a stretch of country are brought to a complete stop.

I have more than once, when camped in the vicinity of a forest holding a man-eater, been greatly inconvenienced in getting supplies or my post on account of the dislike and dread felt by people of passing along lonely forest roads in such a terrorized stretch of country. Mr. F. C. Hicks in his work "Forty Years Among the Wild Animals of

India" shows what an unpleasant and impossible state of affairs can be brought about in any locality by the presence of a man-eater. He was a sportsman with vast experience of tigers; in fact the hunting down and slaying of these animals was his pet hobby. He thus writes of a family of four man-eaters he came across in the Hoshungabad district of the Central Provinces "At the time of which I am speaking there were four man-eaters, one of whom only—the tigress—was the man-killer; the other three being her mate, a huge old male tiger, and two full grown cubs, a male and a female, the progeny of the old male and the man-killing tigress. At that period all these four tigers used to go about together, and though the old tigress alone always performed the actual killing of human beings, all four undoubtedly partook of these repasts on human flesh, so that the other three were virtually potential man-killers of some future date. On arrival at Chaupna, I found that the village was entirely deserted on account of these man-eaters. Only the walls of the houses were standing, and the surrounding fields had run to jungle. Not a single human being was in sight, every man, woman and child having fled in terror from this portion of the country."

Though tigers may be known to infest a particular jungle, it is really very extraordinary how very seldom they are met with unless especially and systematically sought for. In all my wanderings through the jungles when after other game than tiger, I cannot recollect having come across one on more than four or five occasions. One of the biggest that I have ever seen, I came across when motoring along a broad main road through some heavy jungles in Mysore, about two o'clock in the afternoon on my way to a post office nine miles from camp. As bad luck would have it, there was no rifle with me at the time —only a shot gun—and I had the mortification, after pulling up within a dozen yards of the beast and a good look at him, of seeing him turn away sulkily and slowly go back into the forest. I must say the rulings of fate are at times hard to understand, as I had been denied a sight

of this very animal during many tramps I had taken in search of him.

On another occasion in the Doon I suddenly and unexpectedly came on a tigress feeding on a *chital** she had just killed—wounding the animal and finishing her off the following day. However much a man may roam the forest he can never depend on coming across a tiger; even though he may be very close to one, the animal almost invariably becomes aware of his presence and sneaks away, and I have no doubt that many have seen me and got away without my having the smallest idea of their proximity. One day, when searching for a brother sportsman from whom I had got separated in some heavy jungle, I came on a spot in a dry river bed, where I could see M—— had sat down for a quiet smoke. Looking at the spot where he had been seated, I noticed the absolutely fresh pug marks of a tiger over the impression left by M—— in the soft sand, and there was no doubt in my mind that this tiger had been quietly watching my friend enjoying his smoke, but had not been able to pluck up enough courage to attack the solitary man he saw in his power. I feel sure, however, that M—— had a narrow escape that day, as the animal must have been mischievously inclined to have gone forward immediately M—— had moved away.

The instinctive cunning of the tiger is so highly developed as to amount almost to reasoning powers, especially so in the case of man-eaters; there is certainly no other wild inhabitant of the forest that can approach him in diabolical cunning and stealth. The African lion is cautious enough when coming on to a “kill,” but in my opinion he is only a simpleton in comparison with the tiger; and in my experience, once a lion has got to his “kill” he is not easily scared off, whereas the smallest rustle or sound or even the smallest suspicious looking object in the vicinity of his “kill” will send a tiger sneaking away, not to return during the remainder of the night. No animal is more careful or suspicious of traps than he, his precaution

* Spotted deer.

amounting almost to cowardice. Though he may apparently be strolling along carelessly, nothing in his surroundings escapes his notice, and his quick hearing picks up the smallest sound; even such a small sound as the cocking of one's rifle, as I know to my cost, will send him sneaking stealthily off.

As regards the animal's sense of scent, I must say I have no very high opinion of it, as I have not known a tiger to follow up on the scent of an animal as is done by wild dogs. He relies solely on his hearing and eyesight, and in his nightly prowls in search of prey will invariably stick to roads, dry river beds and game tracks on which his footsteps are inaudible, whilst he is in a position to hear and see all movements in the jungle around him. *On hearing any sound, he either stalks towards it stealthily or crouches down and awaits the approach of the animal that made it.* A sportsman on reaching a new shooting ground should make it his business to look up these roads, river beds and *nullahs** for tracks, for if the tiger is in the jungle, these spots are sure to hold them. Strange as it may sound, a benighted man is safer in the thickest part of the jungle than he would be along any road or footpath that may pass through it. Besides the reasons I have already quoted for tigers keeping to roads and footpaths, his fondness for these is in a great measure due to his dislike of having branches and grass, etc., brushing against his face and eyes, both impeding his view and making his progress through the jungle more difficult and noisy.

I have often marvelled at the quietness of the tiger's movements over ground strewn with dried leaves, especially when approaching a "kill," and I have more than once, when sitting up over a "kill" at night, been greatly astonished to find that the first intimation of the animal's presence has been the sight of him standing over his "kill"; and how he could have got there without making the smallest sound I could not for the life of me say, when the whole ground around me was thickly strewn

* A small stream, or even a dry watercourse

with dry teak and other leaves, and a man walking over them would have been heard a hundred yards away.

If the tiger has as good a sense of scent as he is accredited with, he could not fail, as he often does, to pick up and kill the many baits tied out for him, if hidden from his view by bushes or rising ground. I have seen his tracks passing very close to many of these, and in the generality of cases in which the buffalo has escaped being killed, by standing in the tiger's tracks, I have been able to infer that the bait had not been taken for the simple reason that it had not been visible from the tiger's path. Though often warned not to smoke when sitting up for tiger, I never hesitate to do so in moderation if there is a stiff breeze to carry away the scent of my cigarette. *Ursus Labiatus*, or to give him his latest name, *Melursus Ursinus* (the sloth bear) is the animal gifted with a really acute sense of scent, and has twice as sensitive a nose as *Felis Tigris*. Even the wild boar will give the tiger points in scenting out the near presence of a human being. Were the tiger or panther to hunt by scent, as I have heard asserted, game would be decimated.

The jungles most favoured by the tiger are those that are green, heavy and continuous, and well watered by perennial streams or with some good pools of water in them, and with some low hills and evergreen bushes; and above all with a good supply of their natural prey, in the shape of game for the game-killer and cattle for the cattle-lifter. It is seldom that he will be found taking up permanent quarters in a restricted area of forest or a detached and isolated patch of jungle, from which he cannot beat a hidden retreat to more extensive forests. Every tiger is more or less a wanderer, and the supply of game or cattle together with the changes of the seasons are factors to be taken into account, when hunting for the animal. Cattle-lifters will follow any migrations that may occur in the herds of cattle brought to graze in the jungles at different seasons, just as the game-killer, as the hot season approaches and the water begins to dry up in the

jungles, will follow the game as it retreats to other and better watered stretches.

Put briefly, during the hot weather the sportsman after tiger must seek the animal in jungles bordering rivers or large sheets of water, where the game and cattle have collected. During the cold weather he will find that the animal has taken up a particular beat and run where though the water-supply is not over plentiful yet it is enough for his requirements. During the rainy season the sportsman will find it a well-nigh hopeless task trying to locate any tiger, and will have to trust solely to luck on coming across one at all; the animal at that season has no particular lair or run, one place being as good as another. He roams all over the jungles in search of game or cattle which, now having a larger range, both as regards grazing and water, are not tied down to any particular parts of the forests. There is no doubt, however, the tiger during this season is bolder and less cautious than at any other, relying on the excessive rank growth and vegetation, that so quickly springs up in and around the jungles in India immediately after the first few falls of rain, to hide his approach and effectively guard his retreat. It is during this season that he may sometimes be come across in the day-time, when the weather is cloudy and cool.

Writing about the seasons, I may add that the tiger carries his best coat during the period between the months of September and March, for all those that I have shot during this time have had good coats of new, dark and long hair. Generally speaking, by the middle of March in Central and Southern India, and a month later in the sub-montane tracts at the foot of the Himalayas, a great difference for the worse is to be noticed in the coats of these animals. The young tiger has naturally a sleeker, darker and better coat than the old animal, the background of whose coat gets lighter and the stripes fainter as he ages. The tigress has a more heavily striped and altogether prettier coat than her mate. I have not come across them myself, but have heard of albino tigers, two being reported

as having been shot in the territory of the Maharajah of Rewah; as far as I am aware no cases of melanism have ever been seen with regard to tigers, as is so often the case with panthers.

As regards the age to which tigers are said to live, I fail to see how this point can ever be definitely settled; it is impossible to determine the age of any tiger in his wild state, and as regards those in menageries or zoological gardens it is equally difficult to definitely state whether an old animal has died from age or from ill health. The latter is more frequently the case, as confinement and unsuitable feeding must undermine the constitution of animals accustomed to covering long distances in search of their prey, the flesh of which is vastly different to the lumps of meat that are thrown to them in menageries and gardens. Rich warm blood and the hair-covered skin of the tiger's natural food play a great part in keeping it fit and healthy, the hair especially being an useful adjunct towards the functions of digestion. A friend, some years ago, noticed Mabs, a half grown tigress, used to habitually gnaw at some skins she had on the floors of her rooms, and this gave her the idea of providing some skin-covered meat in the animal's daily feed. She very soon noticed that Mabs gave up her chewing of the drawing-room skins and rugs, and became altogether fitter and sleeker. Native shikaris consider thirty years as the extreme limit of a tiger's life; they also have it that a tiger's age can be approximately told by the number of lobes in its liver. For my part I have never had the wish or inclination to test the truth of this statement, relying solely on the condition of the animal's teeth and fangs to give me a fair idea of its age.

There are heated discussions periodically in print regarding the size of tigers, and I am afraid that this is another point which will never be settled definitely until some other form of measurements than that in vogue now is universally adopted and recognized by all sportsmen. No sooner one reads of a twelve-foot tiger being shot, than out comes the announcement by another writer that

there is no such thing in the jungles as a tiger even ten feet in length. Having shot two myself exactly ten feet in length and a good few between nine feet six and ten, I see no reason why exceptional specimens should not reach ten feet six. The average of fully developed male tigers, I should put at nine feet six, and that of tigresses at eight feet three; anything appreciably under these measurements, I should class as small animals. Measurements should be taken between uprights at the tip of the nose and at the end of the tail, and not along the curves of the back. The stumbling block in overall measurements is the tail; often a magnificent specimen due to an abnormally *short tail compares very unfavourably in total length with a weedy tiger, the possessor of a much longer one.* The only solution seems to me, separate measurements should be taken and recorded of both body and tail of the animal shot.

As far as my own experiences and observations go, I think there is no fixed time of the year during which the tigress gives birth to her young, and as she goes about with her cubs from two to two and a half years, she cannot, I should say, breed more than once in three years. The mating season in my opinion is some time about February or March, as I have found that during these months the animal calls more than at any other time, and fights among the males are more often heard. Once while camped in the Doon during the month of February, we were many a night regaled with a great caterwauling made by a couple of tigers about midnight, who selected a spot only a hundred yards from our tents to meet and settle their little differences. By the time the moonlight nights came round, when I hoped to sit up for them, both the animals had left the locality. On another occasion in Central India, also in the month of February, my wife and I were sitting up over a tiger "kill" and were greatly entertained by the sounds of a battle royal between two tigers within a distance of about two hundred yards from our *machan*, but were disgusted to find that they were too occupied in fighting to think of their "kill," and heard

them go off growling and abusing each other. Should I be correct in my surmise that the mating season is in February or March, then the cubs must be born about the beginning or the middle of the rainy season, the period of gestation being about four months. As many as four cubs are born, but it is very seldom that more than two survive to grow up, as, like myself, I expect very few sportsmen have come across more than two roaming with the tigress. Amongst mature animals I think there is no doubt that tigresses predominate in number, and I am inclined to think there must be some truth in the common belief amongst natives, who live in the jungles, that male tigers *kill all the small male cubs they come across.*

The cubs are born blind, and as they grow older are fed with lumps of meat vomitted by their mother on her return from a feed, and are kept well hidden away in some dark and gloomy *nullah* or in a dense patch of long grass. As they are weaned, they are taken out by their mother in her nightly prowls. I quote from "Man-eaters and Other Denizens of the Indian Jungle"—another work written by me—a few paragraphs that show how a tiger cub gradually progresses to the stage, when he is able to fend for himself, though he may continue to stay and hunt with his mother till he is from two to two and a half years of age. "The day came when his mother took him on his first outing. She was particularly savage, growling and chasing away every cowardly hyæna or panther they came across during their walk, and he was made to keep close to her the whole way; and, whenever in an inquisitive or curious mood he tried to leave her side to examine an object, he was severely cuffed and punished. He knew nothing of the world, and when a timid doe *chital*, whom their approach had alarmed, gave its shrill sharp call of fear, he crouched down and whimpered through fright at his mother's elbow.

"The next outing found him a little more confident, especially after he saw the tigress pounce on and kill a spotted deer stag. He simply gloated over the fresh warm blood, that he greedily licked up, even going so far as to growl at his mother when she gently pushed him aside.

"He never forgot the rare fight he had with a peacock he successfully stalked when it came near his lair. He fought furiously and, though well punished by the flapping wings of the big bird, held on with eyes shut till it sank exhausted. How proud he was of his strength after this victory. Soon after he tried a four-horned deer, but the animal was too strong for him till the tigress came to the rescue and killed it with a gentle blow of her paw. By degrees he was initiated into the proper way of stalking and killing the different kinds of deer they came across during their nightly prowls. From close observation of his mother's behaviour when they heard human voices, he got to learn that man was to be severely left alone and avoided; on the few occasions when they were conscious of the near presence of human beings his mother invariably hurried him off. It was hard to understand how she resisted the temptation of killing the nice sleek cattle often found in the company of these dreaded human beings, but resist the temptation she did, more on his account than from any fear for herself, as he found out later when he had grown bigger and wiser.

"He daily grew both in size and strength, developing the instinctive cruelty and cunning of his kind. He was now a half grown tiger and promised to be a splendid specimen on reaching maturity. He still lived and hunted with his mother, and now very often was allowed to make the kills himself, whilst the tigress looked on and gave him a helping hand when necessary. He had not yet gained the full proficiency and polish displayed by her; occasionally a big sambar stag would shake him off and get away. He bungled matters once very badly when trying to bring down a fair sized bison calf, and got hurt himself in the attempt. A young boar had got decidedly the better of a struggle with him, and, leaving a deep gash on his shoulder, got clean away. However, as his strength increased rapidly, and his muscles and sinews developed, he gradually attained full perfection in the art of killing.

"He was still young and inclined to be rash, and one night in spite of his mother's warning, he rushed in and

tackled a cow buffalo, one of a large herd late in returning to the village. His pride received a great fall when the old bulls of the herd closed up and charged down on him; he was knocked off his feet and badly pummelled, and with difficulty got away to the side of his mother, who from a safe distance had been watching the richly deserved punishment administered to her unruly progeny. He was sore both mentally and physically for many days after this humiliating reverse.

“They led a glorious and exciting life for a few more months, killing without mercy anything and everything that came their way during their nightly wanderings in search of prey. He and the tigress now no longer spared any cattle they found astray in the forests; a fat buffalo being their favourite meal, and more appreciated than the flesh of any other animal.

“He had now gained his full strength, and gradually both the tigers found themselves straying further and further away from their lovely and peaceful home in Amarkantak. The rains were on and the herds of buffalo, their favourite and most easily procured prey, were gradually being taken down to the plains by their owners for better and safer grazing. Both these tigers found themselves following the exodus, taking a toll now and again of any animal found straying from the herds.” The above extracts from the complete story of a tiger’s life which I have endeavoured to give, illustrates two or three important traits in the general character of the animal; showing what a solicitous and ferocious mother the tigress makes, and how the instinctive cunning of the young tiger is gradually developed under the careful tuition of its mother.

In my experience, I think there is no truth in the statement that the tiger kills no more than is necessary for its needs. The weasel and stoat are cruel and merciless enough little brutes in their way, but I think they are angels compared to the bloodthirsty and cruel tiger, which I have never yet found spare an animal it had in its power, unless it was through fear of a trap or through a

remembrance of a former unpleasant experience. I cannot do better than quote from my other book, above mentioned, to show what useless and unnecessary slaughter this animal revels in, "An instance of the useless and wanton slaughter gloried in by the King of the Indian Jungles was brought to my notice very forcibly, the day following the bagging of our last tiger. A native came in and reported the loss of his entire herd of seven cattle as killed by a solitary tiger the night before, through their having strayed in the forest and not returned as usual. He said, he had found every one of them dead, and lying within a short distance of one another on the gentle slope of some rising ground, when he had gone to search for them in the morning, and that a small portion of only one of them had been eaten. The spot where this wholesale slaughter had been committed was only three miles from our camp, but was quite inaccessible by car, and as it was a scorching hot day, we chartered a bullock cart to take us there, and reached the place about two o'clock in the afternoon, and were astounded to see the extent of the damage done; the bodies of two bullocks, three cows and two big heifers lay scattered about on the side of a hill and within a circle of not more than a quarter of a mile. The poor animals lay just where they had been struck down by the tiger, as he followed and took them one after the other till he had wiped out the whole herd; none of them with the exception of a heifer had been eaten by the destructive beast. The two bullocks were magnificent young animals of the prominent forehead and straight horned breed, so highly prized in Mysore for their speed and paces by the wealthier rural inhabitants for use in their carts."

This love for ruthless slaughter is very different to the behaviour of the African lion, who usually contents himself with only one victim out of a large herd, and does not continue to harass the herd after he has made his selection of the animal he wants. This is very different to the treatment a herd of deer would experience at the hands of a tiger, as once many years ago in the Doon jungles I came

on six spotted deer lying close to each other, evidently struck down by one or at the most two tigers, which had got in amongst a large herd.

A deal of mystery hangs around a tiger's method of killing his prey, but the general consensus of opinion is that he always dislocates or breaks the neck, some say by a grip with his jaws on the nape of the neck, others by a grip of the throat, getting the necessary leverage by his paw on the muzzle of his victim. My own observations have gone to show that this dislocation of the neck is generally found to have been the immediate cause of death, consequent on the animal being gripped by the throat and never by the nape of the neck; and so I must say I cannot hold with what Baldwin, in his "Large and Small Game of Bengal" writes—"I have examined the carcasses of many scores of bullocks killed by tigers, and have in the majority of cases found the neck broken, and the deep holes at the back of the neck caused by the tiger's fangs."

My own opinion, formed after many experiences and close observations, is that, only animals that happen to be standing up or do not come to the ground immediately the tiger pounces on them are killed by this dislocation process, whilst all others that crumple up with his weight are killed by strangulation pure and simple, being pinned down by a vice-like grip of the throat, which sometimes severs the jugular vein. A tiger strikes at an animal with his paws, only when it is trying to get away from him, and solely with the object of maiming it and impeding its escape, till he can get a grip of its throat. Wandering through the jungles one day I heard a stampede of a herd of cattle that were grazing close by and also heard the man in charge cry out, and getting to the spot as soon as I could, saw a large bullock lying on the ground with both its hind legs broken just above the hocks. The herdsman told me a tiger had just rushed his herd and that he had seen this bullock struck down, as it bolted, by the tiger's paws. I think Sterndale, in his "Mammalia of India" puts it in the most reasonable and sensible manner when he writes of the ways in which tigers kill their prey. "I do not

think they have a uniform way of doing it, so much depends on circumstances—certain it is that they cannot smash in the head of a buffalo with a stroke, as some writers make out, but yet I have known them make strokes at the head, in a running fight, for instance, between a buffalo and a tiger—in which the former got off—and in the case of human beings."

On one occasion, when sitting up over a live bullock for a tiger that never returned to a "kill," the animal was pounced on in the small hours of the morning before it had time even to get to its feet, and though the light was extremely bad I was able to make out that it was simply pinned down by the throat, and killed within less than a minute.

It is really marvellous how a big animal, like a tiger, with the help of its colouring, can make himself almost indistinguishable in even light cover, for even the wary old sambar stag if to leeward is often uncertain that the indistinct object, crouching behind a few tufts of grass, is really a tiger, ready to spring on him. The colouring of the beast may appear very striking and startling, but in reality the bold broken stripes and colour contrast have their advantages for they make for invisibility, and harmonizing with the jungle the animal inhabits go towards camouflaging him in a most effective manner. The zebra is even more startlingly marked, and yet, when I was shooting on the African veldts, it was really marvellous to notice how quickly a large herd of these animals were obliterated from view at a short distance, though they were most conspicuous when close at hand.

The tiger does not depend on his speed, but on his cunning and stealth of approach, to procure his prey, and seldom follows up an animal that has become aware of his presence. I have often when sitting up at night heard a tiger give vent to his disappointment after an unsuccessful stalk or rush at deer in disgusted growls and grunts. Sitting up one night for bear at the foot of the Kymores in Central India, there was a large herd of village buffaloes

grazing within a short distance of my *machan*,* and I heard a tiger rush this herd, and pounce on one of the animals, for I heard it bellow in pain, whilst the whole herd rushed off towards a couple of huts in the jungle where the herdsmen lived. The tiger evidently failed to secure the buffalo, for I heard him go off growling, but a couple of hours after, about two o'clock in the morning, the tinkle of wooden bells, that were suspended from the necks of some of the buffaloes, told me that they had got over their scare, and were grazing again towards the *machan*. The tiger had evidently been hanging around, as I again heard the whole herd stampede back towards their yard, and could tell from the cry made by one of the animals that the tiger had made another attempt to secure one. As in the first instance, he was again unsuccessful, for I heard him going away from the spot, calling loudly.

On getting off the *machan* at dawn and going to the cattle yard I was informed by the herdsmen that a tiger had been worrying their buffaloes at night, and was shown two animals that had been clawed about the hindquarters. I proceeded to look up the spot and soon came on the pug marks of a smallish tigress. This was not a very good jungle for tiger, but was occasionally visited by one, and hence the herdsmen, with their usual apathetic and lazy habits, used to let their buffaloes loose all night and day to graze in the jungles. Even when returning to their "kills," should tigers detect men in *machans* waiting for them, they will often go away calling loudly and angrily, and once I hear this call of disapproval and disgust, I know it is no use sitting up any longer, so get down and go home. In my own experience I have never found the animal return to its "kill" on such occasions.

The tiger has a great aversion to feeding on its "kill" in the open, and if possible drags it to the nearest covert or *nullah* before he commences his meal, starting on the hindquarters of the animal; unlike the panther, who with the exception of only a few abnormally large ones, starts

* Usually a platform of sticks erected in a tree.

on the breast, stomach or shoulders. The amount of flesh a tiger consumes at a sitting depends on the extent of his hunger and the time at his disposal, before he expects to be disturbed. A hungry tiger, at a single meal, will finish off practically all the flesh of both hind legs of a bullock, and, on his return the next night, after pulling the carcass further into the jungle, will demolish the whole of it, leaving only the head, ribs and bones of the legs. His reason for dragging the carcass and concealing it is both to protect it from the vultures and to permit of his lying up closer, to guard it from prowling hyenas and jackals.

I have heard it said, that a lion is capable of jumping over a high thorn fence—such as is made to protect cattle and encampments in Africa, called “bomas” and “zarebas”—and returning the same way with an ox in his mouth. This I consider utterly impossible, as the tiger, undoubtedly a stronger animal, is incapable of lifting and carrying away a full-grown bullock or sambar without dragging it along the ground. The usual procedure is for the beast to grasp its “kill” in its mouth and drag it either alongside himself or backwards (usually the latter) to where he wishes to take it. I have actually seen this being done more than once. Should two or more tigers have a small “kill,” they will seldom leave enough on it to make it worth their while to return, and in such cases usually pull the carcass to pieces and carry off portions of it to different parts to gnaw at and eat at their leisure, and also to avoid falling foul of each other.

To know whether or not a particular jungle holds a tiger, if strolling through it has disclosed no footprints on roads, game paths or *nullahs*, the sportsman may rely on other signs, such as the calling of deer, monkeys, etc., at night. The sambar with its bell, the spotted deer with its shrill sharp call and the muntjac with its hoarse bark infallibly indicate to the experienced sportsman that *Felis Tigris* is on the prowl. These deer also call at a panther, but the experienced hand can always tell by the extent of excitement and uneasiness conveyed by their calls, especially that of the sambar, as to whether it is a tiger or panther.

that is disturbing them. The monkey will never fail to show his excitement by an angry barking and coughing whenever he catches sight of either of these two animals strolling through the forest. These signs should never be ignored by the sportsman. Birds, such as pea-fowl and jungle-fowl, also resent the appearance of a tiger, but as they call at any beast of prey, such as a mongoose or a civet-cat, their notes of alarm are not to be taken so seriously.

The tiger, though not fond of water, will not hesitate to swim even a big river, should he be hard pressed. While shooting in the Doon, I was shown a spot where a tiger, hard pressed by sportsmen on elephants, swam across the Jumna, half a mile below its confluence with one of its tributaries, the Ashan river. It was a broad sheet of water with a swift current, and a man could only cross it by lying across a buoyant log or an inflated skin (called a "surnai" locally).

It is peculiar how certain spots appeal to tigers more than others; no sooner is one shot in such a spot than its place is taken by another, and it is also strange to see how these animals have their own particular beats. Bears and panthers, though living in the same forests as tigers, always take care not to fall foul of them; the only forest-inhabiting animal that shows no respect for *Felis Tigris* is the wild dog. These precocious and destructive beasts are often the cause of a tiger quitting a jungle he is fond of. Though in my opinion they do not attack tigers, I have known them to drive one off his "kill" and annex it for themselves. Mr. F. C. Hicks, with whom I shot on many occasions, informed me that he once saw a tiger and a bear tumble out in a close embrace during a tiger beat. This no doubt was the result of the animals meeting unexpectedly, when neither of them were in the best of tempers. On the whole, the tiger is acknowledged by the rest of the forest-living animals to be the King of the Indian Jungles, and there is none that does not get out of His Majesty's way when he is promenading through his domains.

CHAPTER II.

THE TIGER (*continued*).

CLASSIFICATION INTO VARIETIES.

As I have remarked elsewhere, I think Captain Forsyth has done rightly in dividing tigers into three varieties or kinds, viz., game-killers, cattle-lifters and man-eaters, and I shall now endeavour to give a general description of the three varieties. This division, as I have mentioned before, is solely for the guidance of the sportsman, and is based merely on the habits of the tiger as one species, though the dividing line between the three varieties must not be considered so marked and distinct as to preclude the possibility of the animals of one variety merging into that of another. For instance, the game-killer does not confine himself solely to game and refuse a cow or buffalo, should it come his way, while the cattle-lifter will never scorn a sambar or spotted deer that may cross his path whilst he is prowling around for cattle. The divisions only represent the general habits and haunts favoured by the different animals, cause and effects, I might say, of the environments and lives of the species.

To take the game-killer first. He will invariably be found to frequent very large expanses of forests, where villages are few and far between, but on the other hand where game is plentiful; and having a large area of forest to roam over with enough game for all his requirements, he seldom travels to the outskirts of it, and thus, not being tempted by the sight of cattle, continues to live his peaceful life as game-killer. This life, far away from contact with human beings, in the depths of the forests, has a tendency to make him into a retiring and shy animal as regards temperament, and his wanderings and exertions in search of game make him lithe and active physically, preventing

him putting on flesh and weight. There is no doubt that as he ages and becomes less active and energetic, he gradually devolves into a cattle-lifter, from which he may eventually turn into a man-eater. It is very rarely indeed that a game-killing tiger jumps the intermediate stage of cattle-lifter and takes to man-killing.

So long as a tiger confines himself solely to game, he stands little chance of coming in the way of the sportsman's bullet, as he is so seldom met with, and less seldom systematically hunted. His lair is generally miles away from any village convenient for a sportsman's camp, and to tie baits for him, miles away in the interior of a forest, is more than most men can manage or care to trouble over, when nearer and more easily obtainable tigers are to be had with less expense of money and time. Once, when after sambar along the ridges of the Sewaliks in the Doon, and far from any villages, I came across the pug marks of a true game-killer, an animal who never bothered about cattle and contented himself with sambar and pig, both of which were abundant in the forests. I was successful in bagging this beast, as the same morning I came on his "kill"—a sambar doe—and, sitting up over it, shot him about three o'clock in the afternoon as he returned unsuspiciously to continue his feed. He was a small lightly built animal and taped only nine feet two inches. A very noticeable point in this incident was the total absence of the preliminary scouting always indulged in by the suspicious cattle-lifter. This was the second game-killer I had a chance at in the Doon jungles, though I came on the tracks of others, but some difficulty or other, chiefly distance from camp, prevented me trying for them.

I bagged another in the Central Provinces through the help of a solitary Baiga,* the only human inhabitant within striking distance of the animal's haunts. I made over a young buffalo to this man to tie up for me, and he reported its death on the fourth night of tying up, and also informed me

* A wild aboriginal tribe living in the jungles, always impatient of the advance of civilization.

that the tiger after killing had taken the carcass into a small island of rank grass in the broad and almost dry river bed in which he had tied the animal. As he said half a dozen men would be sufficient to drive the beast out, I started out with only my camp followers (a dozen in all) and, getting to the spot, took up my position on a high bank of the river bed, behind a big sal* tree, and sent the men round from the opposite bank, only putting a solitary stop up a tree, about eighty yards to my right. The cover the tiger was *reported to be lying in was not more than a hundred yards long and scarcely fifty in width, and I was therefore not surprised to see the animal sneak out with almost the first stone thrown into the grass by the beaters.* He came out a little to my left and I allowed him to get over a little more than half the distance to the mainland, from where I knew he would not rush back into the high grass on the island, before I fired with a 12-bore Paradox I was using. The bullet caught him a shade far back and, with only a heavy stumble, he broke into a galloping rush and made for the main forest selecting a deep cutting in the high bank to reach it. It was open ground however that he had to get over, and I was able to floor him with my second barrel just as he was on the point of scrambling up the bank, the bullet catching him at the base of the neck. This, like other game-killers, was a disappointing animal as regards length. On the whole, if a game-killer has been induced to take a bait, or if his natural "kill" has been found, the chances of bagging him either by sitting up or beating are decidedly brighter than they are with the leery old cattle-lifter. The latter is much more conversant with man and consequently with his wiles, in the shape of ambushes.

I shall now try and give a general idea of the cattle-lifter. Taking all tigers in the Indian jungles, I should say quite eighty per cent. are cattle-lifters, and twenty pure game-killers. The cattle-lifter is not always born of cattle-lifting parents, and in many cases has started as a game-killer, and only through force of circumstances or advancing

* *Shorea robusta.*

age has been led to adopt the less strenuous life. This animal will never be found inhabiting forests at any great distance from villages which own herds of cattle; and any forests within easy range of grazing herds, so long as it holds some tree jungle, a few pools of water and some patches of evergreen bushes, will suit a cattle-lifting tiger. He is not impatient, like the game-killer, of the proximity of man, so long as his safe retreat to other and heavier jungles is assured.

The cattle-lifter, like the curate's wife, has a regular round of visits to pay, but unlike her, instead of bringing peace and happiness in his wake, nothing but sorrow and tribulation follow on his heels. His visits are to forests in the neighbourhood of different villages, and these he pays in quite a systematic manner, because, like the man-eater, he makes his stay at any one spot insufferable after being at work a short time. The villagers soon begin to draw in their cattle after a tiger has helped himself to one or two of them, and the beast therefore has to move on to new areas, where he may be an unexpected guest, and where he hopes to pick up fresh dainties, in the way of straying cows or buffaloes, forgotten and left in the jungles by some careless herdsman. After exhausting the hospitality of this spot he moves on again, and by degrees, like the fat woman in the underground railway in London, keeps on travelling round and round. These halting places are well known to the villagers, and an intelligent native shikari or even an European sportsman—given the time—can tell fairly approximately when Stripes may be expected at any of his regular halting places. I have sometimes come to a forest from where a cattle-lifter had only just started on his systematic round of visits, and after searching inquiries of the inhabitants of the village, have left and been able to return to the spot within a few days of that on which I found I had rightly calculated the tiger would be back.

I have also generally found that should the animal be known to have returned, he will be anchored to the spot till he succeeds in getting at least one "kill" there, and then, if time is lost in not giving him another during the next three

or four days after finishing his "kill," he will move on to the next halting place on his programme, where he hopes to find a more hospitable crowd. Whatever place he stops at, it is most amusing to note from his tracks how punctilious he is in looking up each spot in which he has ever found a buffalo or bullock tied out for him; for even though he may not take the bait offered him, due to some former perilous experience, he will, as the native shikaris say, be sure to come to look at and smell the spot. This habit of the cattle-lifter is made use of by the native shikaris in tying up for the sportsmen who visit their jungles, and should the spot be favourable in other respects, the sportsman cannot do better than tie there, making sure, however, that the tiger he is tying for has no reason to shy off the spot.

I remember one beast of this description refused all baits that were tied up for it, were they buffaloes or bullocks, yet killed without any hesitation any animal that he found loose in the jungle. For two nights he deliberately refused the animals I tied out for him, though his tracks showed that he passed within a few yards of them; so on the third night I sat up with my wife in a *machan* within fifty yards of the juicy young buffalo we tied for him on a forest line. It was a lovely moonlight night, and we saw the tiger walk down the line towards the buffalo, and when close up deliberately walk into the jungle to avoid the animal. This was a distinct case of refusal, as the beast came out on to the forest line again between ourselves and the buffalo, and then walked slowly down towards our *machan*, when I easily shot him.

A cattle-lifter is generally a bigger and always a more lethargic and less active animal than the tiger who confines himself to game alone, as the seizure of the prey he lives on does not entail the same amount of restless and tiresome peregrinations through the forests as the game-killer has to resort to to procure his living. The tending of the village herds is generally relegated to small boys and youths who have very hazy ideas of responsibility, and the cattle-lifter can always rely on patience and perseverance bringing their reward in the shape of a cow or a buffalo, left behind in

the jungle. This just suits him and keeps him sleek and happy, as it takes him about three days to get outside a big bullock, and for the next two or three days after his stupendous gorging he is not at all inconvenienced if nothing comes his way. It is only on the fourth or fifth day after he has finished his last bullock, that he begins to seriously search for his next meal. He does not restrict his diet solely to beef, but is always ready to take a sambar, spotted deer or pig, or even such small fry as an armadillo or iguana.

I have been rather amused to read and hear that the cattle-lifter is very particular regarding the quality of the beef he eats, and will refuse an old and lean animal. This is quite at variance with my own experience, as I have never found him turn up his nose at the emaciated old animals I have offered him. During a long three months shoot in Mysore, I made it a practice of only buying the oldest and leanest and consequently cheapest bullocks I could procure. Many of these animals, as the saying is, had one leg already in the grave, and were veritable hat-racks, and, though I often wondered why the tigers took them, they never escaped being killed, and, poor beasts, they were instrumental in getting me quite a satisfactory bag over their bags of bones. However, I will not go so far as to say that he does not make a selection if given the chance out of a herd of cattle, for I have often found in such cases that the animal killed was one of the best in the herd.

There is no doubt that the cattle-lifter is a bold animal, and is ready to take some risks in procuring his food, for he is sometimes bold enough, when hungry, to try and intimidate the herdsman in broad daylight, hoping to be able to get away with or even to have a small meal off his "kill" during the confusion that ensues, and before the herdsman can return with reinforcements to take away the carcass. Though bold enough when actually procuring his meal, he very seldom shows any courage in retaining his "kill," nearly always sneaking off the moment he hears men approaching. It is usually over "kills" of this kind, should an European or native shikari be about, that a cattle-lifter

comes to grief, as he will more readily return to them than to "kills" he has had tied out for him. His guilty conscience, when preying off the villagers' herds, makes a great coward of him, for very often a plucky herdsman single handed rescues the animal he seizes; but he is bold and persistent at night if foiled in the day, as he lurks around cattle pens, if at all distant from the village, sometimes boldly showing himself to the animals and roaring with the object of making them break loose and stampede into the forest; and should he succeed, he will not spare a single one of them and will kill through the mere love of killing. Unlike the African lion, he will never rush an enclosure, being far too cautious and fearing his retreat might be cut off.

One dark night, when camped in some thick jungles where we had no shelter for our animals, two tigers nearly succeeded in making our horses break loose by prowling round our camp and roaring gently, and we were obliged, fearing a repetition of the attempt, to send our nags away at night to be tethered in the nearest village for the remainder of our short stay there.

So long as a cattle-lifter lives in a jungle surrounding or close to a village, there is always a chance of his becoming a man-killer and ultimately a man-eater. The animal is inclined to lie within easy distance of the village, and may any day fall foul of one of the numerous wood-cutters who daily penetrate the jungle, or of a herdsman trying to rescue any of the cattle seized by him.

The last division of the species is that of the man-eater, and this classification is based solely on the habits of the animal, be he from game-killing or cattle-lifting strain. As I have remarked before, ten chances to one he is only a vicious cattle-lifter, though there is no doubt that the offspring of a man-eating tigress, unless their mother is wiped out whilst they are still very young, will adopt her mode of living when they grow up. In the majority of cases, however, the man-eater is only a transformation of either the cattle-lifting or game-killing tiger, and more often than not, the transition is due to force of such circumstances

as already mentioned by me, such as accidentally falling foul of herdsmen and wood-cutters, and also of silly native shikaris who have tried to shoot him with totally unsuitable weapons.

The tiger that has once killed a man, though he may not have eaten him, and may possibly even have bolted temporarily from the scene, becomes quite conscious of his own strength, and on a second encounter with the feeble two-legged animal he has hitherto fled from will be in no hurry to avoid a closer acquaintance. From the moment he kills a second man, nothing will prevent him becoming a confirmed man-eater, especially if the corpse is not taken away from him at once. I know of a case, where a sportsman, about dawn, was out on a forest line in the Doon, after spotted deer, and had only taken with him a single .400-bore rifle firing black powder. Whilst strolling up the forest line with only one native as a companion, he caught sight of a tiger and tigress lying across the line about two hundred yards away. Taking advantage of a large ant-hill near him, he fired at the tiger and hit it in the foreleg, and as neither of the animals bolted, he peered round the ant-hill to have another shot, when he was immediately detected by the tigress who came down on him with a terrific roar and rush. The native, of course, decamped, whilst P—— paid the price of his rashness. The native, running back to camp broke the news, and fortunately close to P——'s camp was encamped an Indian Rajah, also a keen sportsman, who at once proceeded to the scene on his elephant, and after a great deal of trouble was able to shoot the tigress over P——'s body. The animal had dragged P—— quite two hundred yards from where she had killed him, and had sat alongside the body and eaten parts of it here and there. She was very savage and badly mauled the Rajah's elephant before he was able to finish her. I have no doubt this tigress, had she not been wiped out, would have turned into a very bad specimen of a man-eater.

I agree with most writers that the man-eater is generally an old animal, or one incapacitated from some wound or infirmity from catching its natural prey from amongst the

game of the forests or from the herds of cattle that graze in them. That he is not always so, I know well, as one I shot at a place called Birapur was in his prime and quite able to subsist on what the forests or herds of cattle offered him.

Undoubtedly amongst man-eaters, tigresses are more common, and the reason for this is, the animal, when about to have her cubs, retires to very out-of-the-way places in order to get away from her mate, knowing the male tiger has no love for his progeny. Food is often very difficult to procure in such places, and the call to feed her cubs being urgent, she is forced into man-killing some time or other when game or cattle are not to be had. As in the case of cattle-lifters, a tigress is bolder, more cunning and always more savage than the tiger, and it is always a sorry look out for those villages in the jungles that a man-eating tigress is accustomed to look upon as one of her halting places in the large tract of country she haunts. The ordinary tiger, cunning and cruel as he is, is not in the same category as a man-eating tigress, as far as downright viciousness and inconceivable cunning are concerned.

The man-eater is always a coward at heart, and unless the initiative is taken by itself will make itself scarce if it has the smallest suspicion that it is being sought for. Even when it actually does attack a human being, it will be from the back, and it is very rarely indeed that it will attack people from the front or any that are prepared for it. He is not fond of seeking his victims in the cultivated areas round villages, as the panther does, but will haunt roads and pathways in the forest itself and will lie patiently in wait for unsuspecting wayfarers, taking either a solitary man, or allowing a whole file of them to pass by before rushing out and snatching the last one.

A sportsman should be careful never to be off his guard when strolling through any jungle known to be frequented by a man-eating tiger. Only four years ago an Officer of the Forest Department was walking through some forests in his Division, when he was suddenly pounced upon and nearly carried off by a tiger lying in wait alongside the

forest line down which he was walking, and owed his life entirely to the plucky conduct of his sole companion—an Indian Forest Guard—who beat the tiger off his master with the stock of the rifle he was carrying, but did not know how to use. This plucky Indian, I was glad to see from the papers, was suitably rewarded by the local Government.

A man-eating tiger is even a greater wanderer than the cattle-lifter, killing at places fifteen to twenty miles apart on two consecutive nights, and having a very wide range for his operations he is the most difficult of tigers to locate and bring to bag. To my personal knowledge, I do not know of one being shot over a human victim, by which I mean, when returning to a victim on which he has already fed. There is generally such a hue and cry after each of his loathsome murders, that the animal promptly makes himself scarce. It is only by chance that he meets his end, as, due to his constantly shifting his quarters, any systematic hunting down of him, as is done with other tigers, is doomed to failure. When caught red-handed at his gruesome work is the time he runs the greatest chance of being shot, otherwise he will continue to live for many years and terrorize the inhabitants of the large stretch of country he selects for his hunting grounds. Altogether, this animal is an absolute curse, and a sportsman should grasp at even the faintest chance of bringing any man-eater he hears of to book.

Reports of the doings of a man-eater drift into Headquarters, and rewards in proportion to the number of victims laid to his account and his general wickedness are always fixed on his head. It would almost seem that the cunning brute is aware of this, for he continues to elude the numerous native shikaris who, tempted by the reward, do all in their power to lay him low, by trying to ambush him from trees on his expected paths and drinking pools. Like everything else in the world, however, his time for dissolution arrives, and he meets his end, generally under circumstances in which he was not apprehensive of danger.

No village of any locality owning a man-eater can say that the tiger last shot in it was the dreaded persecutor till

fully six months have elapsed, during which no member of their community has been taken or attacked. And I believe this is also the proof that Government requires, before it pays out the proclaimed reward for the destruction of one of these pests.

CHAPTER III.

THE TIGER (*continued*).

DIFFERENT METHODS OF TIGER SHOOTING.

There are different methods by which tigers are commonly shot in India, each method being adapted to its own particular circumstances and environments; but, put broadly, these methods may be classified as, shooting from elephants, beating, sitting up over "kills," and lastly shooting on foot.

I shall start with the last, as it can be disposed of with the shortest description. No one should make it a practice of shooting these animals on foot, for if he does so, sooner or later his shooting days will come to an abrupt end, either by his being killed or being badly and hopelessly maimed for the remainder of his days. The above sentence conveys the inevitable end of the man who too often pits himself on foot against the most cunning and savage beast in the world, an animal whose surroundings and powers of defence and attack give him every advantage in the encounter. By this I do not mean it to be understood that the animal should never be tackled on foot, as every sportsman sometime or other finds himself in such a situation as to have no option but to go in at the brute if he wants to retain his self-respect, or finds a good chance of adding another beautiful trophy to those he already has is slipping away unless he gets busy. A wounded tiger should whenever possible be followed up, but as I shall explain later on, there are ways of doing this, which lessen the attendant risks to yourself and your assistants. By all means take your chance at any tigers you may come across, but at the same time do not be foolhardy and fire without noting how you are situated with regard to the animal, and weighing every likelihood of its taking you at a disadvantage.

However good a shot you may be, and however much confidence you may have in your shooting and your weapon, things go wrong at times. *Felis Tigris* is often not floored with even a shot through his heart, and can charge home for the few seconds that are necessary for him to make a terrible mess of you, and you will find he will do this some day if you persist in following him on foot without taking the greatest precautions. Mr. F. C. Hicks, the author of "Forty Years Among the Wild Animals of India" and a great slayer of tigers on foot, most aptly likens the case, in which he was very badly mauled by a wounded tigress, to that of a pitcher going to the well too often.

A tiger, or for the matter of that, even a deer when shot through the heart, often travels a hundred yards or more before he drops; so the sportsman who is unlucky enough to be in the direct line of the hundred yards in which the stricken beast is rushing stands a good chance of getting into serious trouble. One of the biggest tigers I ever bagged was in the Chanda District of the Central Provinces. He gave no sign indicating that he had been touched, and it was only by my walking up in the direction in which he had galloped off that I came on him, stone dead.

If a tiger is met with on foot, it is always advisable to allow the animal to turn away from you, or show some signs of wanting to get away, before you fire at him, as tigers have a habit of bounding off in the direction they are facing when hit. There are many situations when the animal may be fired at without much chance of a charge, but always be careful when you find the animal has seen you and shows no inclination to move off. The charge of a tiger with its angry grunt and roar and altogether threatening appearance has a demoralizing and nerve racking effect, and has to be undergone to be fully realized. The Indian gun-bearer generally can, with some truth, plead extenuating circumstances for his conduct in deserting his master.

This calls to mind a very amusing story told me by an Official in East Africa. F—— the narrator was a thorough good sort, and I am sure was not all that he made himself

out to be in this and in other stories he told against himself. He and a friend sat up one night in a tin shanty, and from one of its windows wounded a lion that was in the habit of drinking at a small pool of water within ten yards of it. Early next morning, both the men, accompanied by about twenty African "Boys," went to track up the wounded beast and, as neither F—— nor his friend had had much experience with lions, they were both terribly demoralized and shaken when the wounded animal made a demonstration of charging towards them from a bush in which he was lying. F——, as he put it himself, turned round sharply, and made, with the Africans, for the door of the shanty, and, saying to himself that he was a married man and therefore had prior claim to the shelter, did not hesitate to trip up all those of his fleeing dusky companions who came in his way, and gaining the shelter, shut the door in the faces of those he left lying on their backs outside crying out pitifully "Bwana! Bwana!!" (Master! Master!!) F—— kept both my wife and myself alive during the last dinner we had with him by giving an account of a number of his shooting experiences—always against himself: his powers of embellishment were truly marvellous.

Most of the above precautions and those that follow for tackling a tiger on foot are no doubt taken by experienced sportsmen, but, for the sake of the general reader and the impetuous and new hand, I think they will bear repetition.

It is in my opinion a great mistake to try and brain a tiger, the neck shot is easier and just as effective as one through the brain, which latter can seldom be relied on to come off as wanted. Should the animal be crouching the chances are greater of succeeding with the brain shot than if it were standing up and facing you, for obvious reasons. A shot behind the shoulder, however well placed, though it will kill the animal, will often not do so quickly enough for the sportsman on foot. A shot in the spine is as effective as any, as through its paralysing effect the tiger is immediately rendered *hors-de-combat*. On the whole, the sportsman after tiger on foot should invariably aim for the neck, as, though the vertebral column extending to the

skull may not be actually broken, yet a close enough shot to it will drop the animal like a stone.

Needless to say, when after a wounded tiger on foot, rely solely on yourself and your rifle, if unsupported by a brother sportsman, and always shoot to kill or cripple, picking your shot as carefully as the circumstances will allow. Use as heavy a bore, consistent with accuracy and handiness, as you can stand, and do not enter patches of long grass or thick coverts before you have done your best to ascertain that the animal is not in them by throwing in stones and putting men up trees to look down on and thoroughly search them. It may be a case of "Hobson's choice," but on the whole you can, after taking the above precautions, go more safely through these nasty patches where you are at a decided disadvantage, and can then follow on the tracks more rapidly in more open jungle. It is in these patches of thick scrub and small *nullahs* with steep overhanging banks that a wounded tiger will hang up and, if mischievously inclined, will give you a lively time. Small hand grenades, procurable in all petty bazaars, are very effective in getting a wounded tiger to disclose his whereabouts. I usually carry a stock of two or three dozen about with me in camp.

I remember a case of following up a wounded tigress in the Doon, where it was fortunate that I made a cast ahead, and got on to the opposite bank of a small *nullah* which led in the direction the wounded beast had taken. I was able to catch sight of and shoot her as she crouched and awaited our approach, lying hidden under the bank. She never expected me from the opposite bank, and I was easily able to administer the *coup-de-grace*. It would have been a bad business had we followed straight on her tracks, as no stone could have found her in the shelter of the bank she was lying under.

It is hardly necessary to say, the sportsman must not keep his eyes glued to tracks on the ground; he should search very closely every bush or large rock likely to harbour the wounded beast he is after, before he comes to it. The best plan is to get the shikari or tracker on the blood trail

and, letting the man proceed a yard ahead of you, to support him with your gun ready for all emergencies, having first warned him in case of a charge to skip behind you at once. Another, and a safer plan for following up a wounded tiger is to procure a herd of buffaloes, any number from ten to twenty will answer, and to follow behind them with a herdsman on either flank gently keeping them in the required direction. The herd should be driven slowly along the tracks of the wounded tiger, and if he has not got away the buffaloes will very soon let you know by their behaviour exactly where he is lying. The tiger will now either make a demonstration to intimidate the animals, or will break cover in his attempt to get away. The result, in any case, will be that the sportsman will get the chance he wants of finishing off the beast.

I must admit, however, that personally I have not met with much success on the three or four occasions on which I have sought the help of buffaloes in tracking up wounded tigers, not so much through any flaw in the utility of the method, as to circumstances in which it could not be fairly tested. On one of these occasions I found the tiger dead, and on the others the wounded animals had managed to get clean away.

A wounded tiger should always be given a few hours before being followed up, and the reason for this is apparent to all but the impatient and inexperienced young sportsman. Should the animal be very severely wounded, leaving him alone for a night will either give him time to die of his wounds, or at least reduce his strength to such an extent as to make him less dangerous to tackle. On the other hand, however, by giving him this time he may get clean away; but, taking the matter as a whole, if he has the strength to get away, he would certainly have been a very nasty customer to deal with immediately after being wounded. Though you may lose a good trophy, console yourself with the truth of the saying that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Finally if a man persists in going on foot after every tiger he hears of, he will sooner

or later figure in the papers as the subject of one of those "regrettable incidents" we read of periodically.

The sport of shooting tigers off elephants is largely indulged in in those tracts of country where there are open forests or extensive stretches of grass jungles, more commonly found in Northern than in Southern India. In the *Nepal Terai* it is, in fact, the only way of bagging these animals. Though this method of shooting is exciting enough, yet the sportsman who has bagged his tigers without the aid of elephants does not find the same fascination in it.

Elephants can be used in different ways in hunting down tiger; sometimes proceeding in a line and beating him out of a patch of jungle towards the sportsmen, posted ahead, also on elephants, in the direction the animal is likely to take; at other times they are used for ringing round the patch of jungle in which the tiger has been marked down, and then in dense formation closing in on him, when the sportsmen from their *howdahs* finish off the beast as it charges or sneaks around in its efforts to find an opening through the densely packed ring of elephants. Another method of using elephants is to systematically go through every patch of jungle on the mere chance of putting a tiger up, and, as a very large area of ground can be covered in this fashion, should it be good tiger country, the chances are that a tiger will be put up sooner or later during the day.

It is when a wounded tiger has to be followed up that the elephant is most useful, as on its back the thickest of jungle can be entered by the sportsman, who from his elevated position is better able to spot and shoot the tiger lurking in it, than he could were he foolhardy enough to enter such a place on foot. A good fighting tiger will give the sportsman, on an elephant's back, as lively a time as he could wish for, and will repeatedly charge home and maul the elephant badly in his endeavour to pull the rider off.

As these elephants are always borrowed property, it behoves the sportsman, as often as not a man with a small

purse, to go slow, for to pay for one of these valuable animals might just about break him. It certainly takes the gilt off the gingerbread to feel your temporarily exalted position on the back of one of these animals might in more senses than one be a precarious one, as many of them turn tail and bolt foolishly at the smallest demonstration made by a tiger, when you stand a good chance of being brushed off ignominiously from the back of your panic-stricken steed by branches of trees, possibly into the very jaws of the pursuing animal. There are few elephants that will remain staunch after once being mauled by a tiger, and many explanations will be necessary to the owner should you happen to be the unlucky rider of the animal mauled.

On the whole I must confess that I would rather go after tiger in any other way than on the back of an elephant, especially as I have never been lucky enough to get one myself when so mounted, though I have helped at the death of two or three. Somehow I always have the feeling that I am only an automaton when beating in line with elephants for tiger, and never feel the same satisfaction in this form of sport as I do when I am pitting my own wits against his instinctive cunning. I find I cannot describe the sport half as well as Colonel Heber Percy, who with his greater knowledge of it, writes thus "The ordinary plan, if a tiger is marked down into a particular patch of grass, is to send one or two guns ahead to prevent the creature slinking out, and these guns should, if possible, be posted in trees, as the restless movements of the elephants will almost invariably head the tiger back, and the elephant is better employed with the line. Of course, if it is considered desirable to hem the tiger in till the line gets up, elephants should be posted ahead, but a man in a tree will as a rule get a better chance than if he were on an elephant. The forward guns being posted, the line beats up to them with guns on the flanks and the pad elephants in the centre; if there are more than two guns with the line, the remainder distribute themselves along it. The elephants should not, if possible, be more than twelve yards apart at starting, and if a tiger is wounded should be closed up till they almost touch one another, as

the elephants and *mahouts** will gain confidence, and the formidable aspect of the close line will prevent most tigers from attempting to charge home; short half-hearted attacks he may make, but the line will stand firm, for the *mahouts* are under too close supervision and have hardly room to turn their elephants round; the guns on the flanks are also close enough to protect the whole line. To hear of tigers making good their charges and springing on to elephants' heads sounds very nice and exciting, but nothing is more demoralizing to the elephants, especially at the beginning of a trip, and every precaution should be taken to save your elephants from getting mauled; for, if injured, many of them never recover confidence, and become absolutely worthless for tiger shooting afterwards. Forsyth mentions an instance of an elephant dying of wounds received from a tiger. It is all very fine for the sportsman to take a charge, standing in a *howdah* perched on the back of a large tusker; but it is a very different thing for the opium-sodden nerves of an unarmed *mahout* riding a small timid pad elephant. Close order is the only safe formation for pad elephants, and should invariably be adopted. If the tiger is marked into a particular bush, the line may be halted, and the *howdah* elephants alone be taken up to engage him; but until the *mahouts* have thorough confidence in the guns a fight is better avoided." The above gives a very good and comprehensible idea of the general procedure followed in all tiger shooting done off elephants.

The method most generally adopted, and also most popular, for bagging tigers is that of beating for them with the aid of men, and driving them towards guns, suitably posted in their line of retreat; to do this successfully needs a vast amount of careful thought and planning, to say nothing of the possession of a good knowledge of the animal's ways and habits; in fact, taken altogether, beating for tiger is almost an art, and very few men are really proficient in it.

* Elephant drivers.

There are no hard and fast rules that can always be adopted, but the experienced sportsman learns how to adapt himself to the peculiar circumstances attending each beat, and, studying both the forest the beat is concerned with, and any particular idiosyncrasies of the animal about to be beaten, he makes his preparations accordingly.

I shall, for a start, give only a very general idea of how a beat should be set about and conducted to a successful ending, and shall later touch on each point that needs elucidation. On arrival at his shooting grounds, the sportsman should, with the help of the local inhabitants, get to learn as much of it as he can; and finding out the runs of tigers, select spots—how to choose these I shall explain later—for tying out one or two young buffaloes (or bullocks, if not offensive to local religious principles). The feeding, watering and bringing home of these animals in the morning, if still alive, should be delegated to special men. As soon as a "kill" is reported, men should be sent round to the closest villages to collect beaters, who should assemble either at the sportsman's camp or at some pre-arranged spot near, but not within hearing of, the jungle to be beaten. The sportsman, about midday when the tiger is lying up gorged with his overnight's meal near his "kill," should proceed to the spot, and as silently as possible have a *machan* erected—if not already put up—on a tree in the direct line the tiger is likely to take as soon as the beat starts. Whilst the *machan* is being put up, he, either personally or through his shikari, puts men up different trees on either flank, with the lines spreading out from the point of his *machan* in the shape of a triangle or arc, with the line of beaters as the base. The patch to be beaten is now surrounded on all sides, and the beaters on a given signal, that all is ready, start in extended order to come through the patch from the further end, shouting and hitting the trees with their axes, towards the sportsman's *machan*. The tiger, if in the enclosed area, is gradually driven forward towards the sportsman, and kept in the right direction by the stops on both flanks, till he finally emerges within shooting distance

of the *machan*, and is either killed or passes on out of the beat.

The successful termination of a beat depends on the careful consideration of many details, the most important of which is the selection of suitable spots for tying out the baits. I have mentioned elsewhere that tigers are particularly fond of prowling at night along roads, game paths and *nullahs*, so the junction of two or more of these leads is a good spot to tie at, and also any spots close to pools of water where tracks show a tiger is accustomed to drink. Having found one of these junctions, the next thing to do is to see that there is some water close by for the animal to drink at after his meal, and also that there is some thick covert of either bushes or long grass, for him to drag his "kill" into and lie up in. Having both his food and drink close to him, he will not move away, unless disturbed, for the whole of the day following his "kill." It is next to useless tying up at a spot where there is no water or cover close by, if beating is the object of the sportsman. Besides these two essentials, namely water and cover, the sportsman must see that the general configuration of the country is suitable for beating; for if there should be any troublesome hills close by, or the jungle be one continuous sheet of forest, the beat is not likely to be successful. The ideal patch to get a tiger to lie up in is an isolated and detached piece of forest with only one or two distinct natural leads to heavier forests; even a block cut out of a large forest, so long as it is circumscribed by roads, forest lines or *nullahs*, makes a capital beat. The beat itself should rarely exceed half a mile in length, as anything longer would afford too many loopholes for the tiger to get through. Just a word of advice; when selecting a spot to tie, look around and see that it is not haunted by a panther, as the latter animal will give a lot of trouble and, being always on the move before the tiger, will, like the early bird, get the worm—the bait.

Most forests have spots that have been used from almost time immemorial for tying up baits for tiger, and the sportsman should at least inspect and give them a trial,

for the beats pertaining to these spots have been worked over many times and the lessons learnt from past failures or successes can be utilized. The sportsman, however, after studying the country should not hesitate to change the spots for both his "tie" and his *machan*, should he find that he can do better by doing so, as time and different circumstances may have brought about a change in the character of the beat.

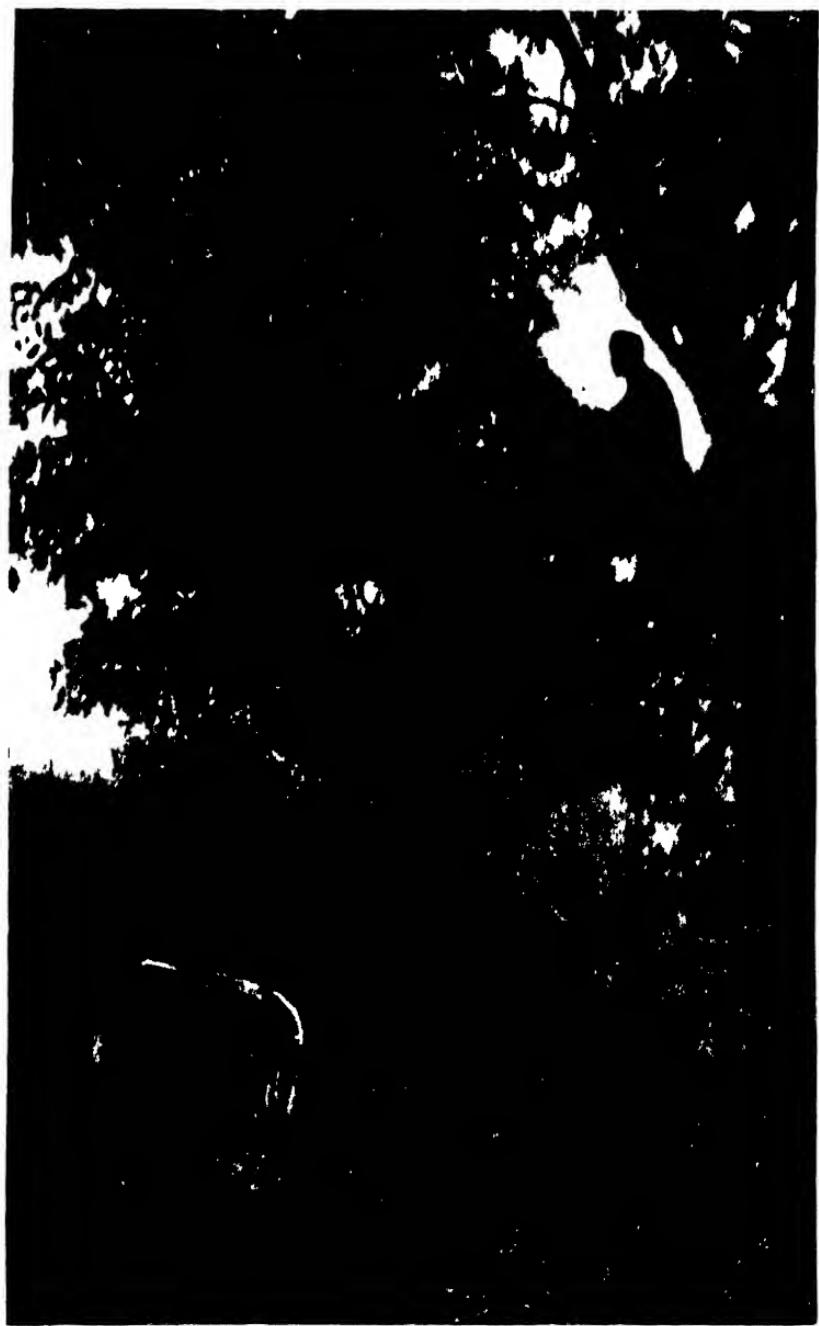
I remember when doing a shoot in the Central Provinces, in spite of my better judgment, I was induced by the local shikari, a Baiga, to tie up twice at a spot that had been formerly used for successful beats, and go through the beat in the same way. The tiger, as I feared and expected, slipped through without my getting a sight of it; the whole reason for this being the general character of the country had been greatly changed by some felling operations that had occurred since the last successful beat. I took care to tie differently when putting out the next bait, and selected quite a different position, in opposition to the Baiga's wishes, for my *machan*. After the tiger had been shot by me, having come out exactly where I had expected it, the rascally Baiga made out that the god of the forest must have advised me to select the spots I did, being pleased with the goat and cock I had given the Baiga to propitiate him with, the evening before. This is an instance, where striking out on one's own line turned up trumps, but there is often a chance of spoiling the whole show if due respect and consideration is not paid to the lessons learnt from former and well known beats, especially if the sportsman has not troubled to make himself conversant with the country he is beating.

Some years back, I was trying for a tiger in the Nagpur District in the hot weather, and, as the particular jungle the animal frequented was a long way from camp, I did not go out as is my custom to inspect it, but left the tying up of the buffalo to an experienced Gond shikari, who tied out alongside a broad forest line separating the Government forest from a very respectable patch of privately owned forest which held the only piece of water

for miles around. On the shikari reporting the killing of the animal I visited the scene, and did not at all fancy the spot he had chosen for the *machan*. It was alongside the forest line, and in my opinion far too open and altogether out of the route I expected the tiger to take. I rather liked a spot some three hundred yards away to the right with some very likely jungle round it, and with a distinct lead down the face of some rising ground. Though the shikari told me a tiger had once been shot at the spot he fancied, and that the animal, we were about to beat for, was sure to come out there, I refused to listen to him, and tied at the spot I had selected, with the result that I had the mortification of seeing the tiger trot quietly past and within easy range of the tree the shikari had begged of me to sit on. The animal was too far off for me to fire at with any hopes of killing it, so I ended without having a shot. I had only myself to blame, as I had failed to find out in time that the jungle where I sat thinned away into poor scrub, only a short distance behind me, whereas there was some beautiful forest across the line, for which the tiger made.

To continue with the subject of baits—the real object of tying these is both to locate and localize the tiger, and this can best be done by making sure that the rope with which the bait is tied is weak enough to be broken by the tiger, and yet strong enough to hold the tethered animal. The tiger does his utmost to break this rope and drag away his "kill," and, to help him to some extent, the tie should be on some flat piece of ground, as any inequality in the surface may deprive him of the leverage necessary to snap the rope. Sometimes the animal, if unable to break the rope, will bite through it, but should he not do either of these, he will probably not lie near his "kill."

As I have remarked elsewhere, no reliance should be placed on his being able to smell out the animal offered him; so the bait should be placed where it can be seen from a good distance all round. The custom is to tie the buffalo or bullock, as the case may be, short by the foreleg to a handy stump or tree, but personally I do not attach the



"Tie out a fresh bait and sit up over it."

smallest importance as to how the animal is tied. Though the native shikaris gasp at the method, I never hesitate to tie by the neck or by the horns any extra restive or troublesome animal, or those whose forelegs show signs of being chafed through careless tying; and I have never found tigers less keen on taking animals tied in this fashion.

It may appear cruel to tie up at all for tiger, but I think a little reflection will soon show that it is a case of one life being the direct means of saving many others. The lives of hundreds of cattle and game, which may reasonably be considered the toll of a solitary tiger during his lifetime, is cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of one. It is can fully realize how little anxiety and fear is shown by the tethered animal till the very moment he is pounced upon; only the sportsman, sitting for tiger over a live bait, who and the end is much quicker than it could be by the knife of the butcher, a method of killing countenanced by all.

There is no doubt a young buffalo is a better bait for tiger than a bullock; by this I mean that the tigers' palate is more tickled by the flesh of the former than that of the latter, though a bullock is never refused. It is, however, only in Mysore that I have seen bullocks used for such a purpose, and there are many places where a native shikari, though he may go along with the bullock, will refuse to tie it up with his own hands. He is ready enough to untie it to bring back to camp next morning if still alive. Should a bait be refused by a tiger, try changing it for another animal and tie it in a different spot. If still refused, it is a good plan to sit up over it, as the chances are, the tiger cannot resist coming to have a look at the animal.

I was once the possessor of a hideous and aged bullock, marked in a most curious manner with only a black face and the rest of the body white. This animal persistently refused to be killed, and early one morning on going to look him up, I found from tracks that two tigers had passed within five yards of where he had been tied in a dry river bed. That day, on bringing him back to camp, my wife and I set about making a different animal of him

by dyeing parts of his coat with a strong solution of permanganate of potash, and, by the time we had finished, we had sealed his death warrant, for we turned him out quite a beauty and gulled the tigers into killing him that very night.

Animals tied out should not be visited before the sun is well up; by an earlier visit the tiger is very likely to be disturbed, either at the "kill" or before he has properly settled down for the day. Should the bait have been taken, the shikari should approach the spot where it was tied as silently as possible and mark and scrutinize the ground closely for tracks; a panther very possibly may have killed the animal. If the ground is hard and does not show tracks there are other infallible signs that will soon tell him whether the kill is by Stripes or Spots. Should it have been the handiwork of a tiger, he will find the drag has been a long one, and through bushes and over ground, that is quite beyond the strength of a panther. The latter animal, even if he has succeeded in breaking the tethering rope, will not drag a heavy "kill" beyond a few yards, and the carcass will be found to have been eaten at the chest and under parts of the limbs, and the stomach torn open in a very untidy and dirty way; the "kill" will also bear traces of claw marks on muzzle and shoulders.

I have already, a few pages back, given a general idea of how a beat should be conducted, and here will only touch on a few important points that deserve close attention on the part of the sportsman. He should be careful to see that his *machan* is erected within the fringe of the jungle to be beaten, and not across a road or forest line, or in an open space, as a tiger invariably takes these at a rush, and sometimes even refuses to face them at all, preferring to go back on the beaters or force the stops. As I have said before, the spot selected for the *machan* should be in some direct lead to heavier jungles beyond, a route that the tiger would naturally take. It is useless attempting to drive him in the direction of open country. It is a mistake to place a *machan* in a narrow *nullah*, for though he may use the *nullah* at night, when frightened he will generally

go along the banks of it, from where he can obtain a better view, knowing he can always slip into the *nullah* should it be to his advantage. The gun should, however, command such a *nullah* if it should happen to be in the beat and leading in the direction the tiger is likely to take. It is an advantage to have the *machan* at least fourteen feet above the ground, though a foot or two higher is better for many reasons. From this extra height the sportsman's bullet is less likely to ricochet, and there is less chance of the *machan* itself being seen by the tiger.

The correct placing of "stops" plays a very important part in a beat, and the more "stops" the sportsman can afford to draw from his supply of beaters the better his chances will be of bagging the tiger. Only the most intelligent men should be selected as "stops," men not likely to lose their heads and get either tongue-tied or too noisy at the sight of Stripes coming towards them. The nature of the jungle surrounding the *machan* will determine the distance at which these "stops" should be put from one another, but if possible do not have a man closer than thirty yards from the *machan*, and the first three or four "stops" on either side should be placed close enough to each other to prevent any tiger forcibly breaking through them. The "stops" within a hundred yards on either side of the *machan* should be what are known as "silent stops," and should only turn the tiger towards the *machan* by a gentle cough or tap of the tree immediately it is sighted going in the wrong direction. The further "stops" should not be "silent stops," but should start making their presence known as soon as the beat starts; by doing this, they will prevent the tiger breaking out at the flanks immediately on being disturbed.

Another very important item in a beat is the placing of two men on different trees within fifty and a hundred yards behind the *machan*. These men should be ordered to keep perfectly quiet and closely watch every tiger that gets past the *machan*, taking particular note of the behaviour of the animal and marking him down exactly if showing signs of being wounded. These two men will

prove invaluable in marking the direction a wounded beast has taken, and will appreciably lessen the danger of following it up. A good few tigers, that got past my *machan* going strong, I have been able to pick up, sometimes stone dead, on these men being able to direct me.

A good substitute for "stops," when these are scarce, is large sheets of newspaper, hung about three feet from the ground on bushes and tree trunks. Weak spots for which "stops" are not available can be successfully guarded in this way, and it will be found that no tiger will force them; he will probably roar at sight of the fluttering paper, but will not approach them. The paper should not be less than twelve or fifteen paces apart.

The sportsman should carefully note the behaviour of the tiger once a beat has started, and learn when to push the beat home and when to call the beaters off and leave the animal alone for another day. It certainly requires a deal of forbearance and patience to stop a beat, but there are undoubtedly occasions when it is advisable to do so, if an accident to the men is to be avoided. A tiger that tries more than once to break through the beaters is best left alone for another day, when, having got him to "kill" in a different spot, he may prove more amenable to being beaten out. Likewise, a beast that is extra noisy and keeps too close to the beaters generally means mischief, and should a gun fired from the line of the beaters not move him along faster, the sportsman should be prepared for trouble. The beaters should be carefully instructed to get up into trees as soon as the sportsman's shot is heard, and a code of signals, by means of a whistle explained beforehand, arranged with the men, indicating the sportsman's wishes.

On one occasion when expecting a single tiger in a beat, I soon got unmistakable evidence of the presence of two, by the animals roaring and growling in different parts, and one of the beaters came round to my *machan* to report that the tigers were very obstreperous and intimidating the men. On hearing this I sent a gun round to be fired off by the shikari in charge of the line of

beaters, and, on this man firing a couple of shots, a tigress came sauntering along, showing no signs of fear or haste, and was shot by me. The other beast, however, was obstinate and only became more threatening than ever towards the beaters. As the beat was a short one and he refused to come on, I felt it would be unfair to the beaters, and also folly, to push him too far, so I reluctantly called the men off. As it happened I had two "kills" that day and with the same lot of beaters had just bagged another tigress, only a mile away in the first beat.

To safeguard against the possibility of men, who have not been present during the beat, thrusting themselves in among the beaters when the time comes for payment, the sportsman should distribute amongst the men, just before the beat starts, small pieces of paper with his initials and date written on them, and at the conclusion of the beat only pay such men as can produce these guarantees of having been present. These payments should invariably be made by the sportsman himself, and should be in hard cash, as paper money has no value in the jungles. The days are gone, in most parts of the country, when men could be induced to beat for the love of the sport, a nominal wage or a desire to rid themselves of a pest without remuneration; nowadays four annas a man is usually paid to the beaters, and double that sum if the tiger is bagged. Ten rupees is generally the reward a shikari expects for every tiger he helps in bringing to bag, besides his daily wages. It is a good plan to give a reward of one rupee to each of the two men who have tied out the "kill" over which the tiger has been bagged, as it will act as an incentive to the men to try and get their "ties" killed. Unless the man has a reward to look forward to, it is very possible, when lazily inclined, he will shirk the walk, especially should it be long, and tie the animal close into camp.

A sportsman should not give up hopes of a tiger if deer or other animals come out in the beat, but should wild dogs show up he may take it for granted that his beat is going to be a blank; also if he notices monkeys running

along the ground he may take it as a bad sign, as these animals will always keep to trees if there is a tiger or panther in the beat.

Nothing else should tempt a sportsman when beating for tiger, he must leave everything alone, as the fewer shots fired in the jungle, the more likely he is to eventually bag the game he is longing for. Even when the tiger appears he should reserve his shot till it is in such a position as to preclude any chance of its going back into the beat. Another point of importance is, never to have old, deaf or partially blind men and little boys amongst the beaters, as they are likely to lose their heads and come to grief should a tiger break back. There is no objection to using old men as stops far away from the *machan*, but it is unwise to have boys in any capacity when beating for tiger. A man, mauled or killed, even though it may be solely through his own fault or disobedience of orders, will usually make it impossible for the unlucky sportsman to procure beaters again in that locality. All sorts of arbitrary behaviour and callousness on his part will be fabricated and spread around.

In a tiger beat once, I saw a "stop" descend from his tree and sit down on the ground at the foot of it, simply because he had not the wish to stick an uncomfortable perch for half an hour, and I lost the tiger I was beating for through having to call out and order the man to get up the tree again. On another occasion, when beating for bear, I had ordered my orderly to go a long way behind my position and get up a tree, but to my horror, when a wounded bear got past me, I saw this man suddenly emerge from behind the very rock I was seated on, and with a yell start to run, and so draw the animal on to him. Had the situation not been so intense I could have laughed at the ludicrous figure the man cut, scrambling up the hillside with his turban flowing behind him, and with the animal almost on top of him. He had to thank a lucky shot that I was able to get in, for ridding him of his determined and mischievously bent pursuer.

It will save the sportsman endless trouble if he gets a small and handy *machan* made at home, and takes it along with him on his shoot. I have such an one, that accompanies me on every shooting trip I take. It consists of strong wire-netting stretched on to a framework 4 feet by 2 feet made of light tough wood, and can be put up without any trouble or noise, and having iron rings let into the framework, there is hardly a tree on which it is impossible to tie it up. A rough bamboo ladder is also very essential when out tiger beating, and can usually be put together by an ordinary village carpenter on the sportsman's arrival at his shooting ground. Personally, I carry along a certain number of tools on a shoot and, should a carpenter not be handy, can put a serviceable ladder together myself in three or four hours' time. Another useful article to have is a small saw, to cut away quietly all small branches obstructing the general view from the *machan*. I feel sure many a tiger is frightened away before the beat starts by the noise made by men cutting down branches with their axes; if not actually frightened away, he is at least inclined to avoid the direction in which he has heard the men busy, and will need more pushing to pass it. If the *machan* is at the proper height, there is no necessity to screen it with leaves and branches, as the tiger's attention is fully engaged with the noise behind him, and he rarely looks up; if branches are arranged round the *machan*, they are very likely to come in the way when a second shot is required to be taken hurriedly at a tiger, possibly rushing under the *machan*.

It is a great relief to drop a tiger within sight of the *machan*, and this can best be done by using as heavy a battery as the sportsman can stand. In my opinion, a small bore magazine rifle is quite unsuitable for use in beating for tiger; it is a difficult weapon to shoot with quickly, and lacks greatly in stopping power. The advantage in a heavy rifle is the knock down blow it gives, enabling the sportsman to get in a second shot if the first has not done its work thoroughly. Broadly speaking, the weapon used should be both powerful and handy to manage

and in my experience I have found a 12-bore Paradox the *beau ideal* gun for use in a beat; failing a Paradox, the ordinary 12-bore shot gun firing ball cartridge is preferable to any single barrel magazine rifle. The blood trail of an animal wounded by either of these guns is much more easily followed than that of one hit by a small bullet. For tiger, I should not recommend anything smaller in the way of rifles than a double .400 high velocity firing split or soft nosed bullets, and with a broad open V as foresight. The sportsman should never allow thoughts of spoiling his trophy to influence and keep him from putting in an extra shot if he thinks there is the smallest likelihood of the animal getting to his legs after being floored. A tiger that once finds his legs is likely to give endless trouble and anxiety, even though he may drop within a few yards, if the rush carries him into thick cover. I have seen men using heavy .600 single barrelled rifles for tiger. Undoubtedly a .600 bullet is a finisher, if rightly placed, but there is the important "IF" to be taken into account, and this bullet wrongly placed is no more effective than a slightly smaller one, also wrongly placed. The bigger bullet is certainly a greater crippler, but that is not sufficient for a dangerous beast with such marvellous vitality as a tiger. To cripple a bison or a sambar is half the battle, but with an active animal like a tiger, who is bent on revenge, a handier weapon is required, and one with which a man can shoot quickly, and prevent the animal getting out of sight. The recoil from such heavy rifles must affect quickness of manipulation, whereas a slightly smaller bore, say a .476 for instance, comes in quite handily for a second shot, and is powerful enough, the great "IF," above mentioned, being on the side of the sportsman, and he shooting only to kill and not to wound.

There remains now only night shooting to be described, a method of shooting tigers that is only resorted to when the nature of the jungles will not permit of beating, or when beaters are not procurable. I agree with most writers on the subject, that sitting up over "kills" at night is often disappointing, but yet I have had many a good trophy that

I could not have got in any other way than by what I have heard some men call poaching. I quite disagree with those folk that call sitting up over "kills" by this name, and I am sure it will be found that this idea is only held by men who, either through their ability of borrowing a stud of elephants or of commandeering hosts of beaters, prefer having the animal hemmed in and driven out to their *machan*, without having the haziest idea of the ways and habits of the animal produced before them.

Sitting up at night over a "kill" has a fascination for a lover of nature and the jungles, which is difficult to describe to the man who finds enjoyment in no other method of tiger shooting than beating for them under a broiling sun, when the jungles are seen at their worst. To take up your silent watch in the hushed forests during the long moonlight night, and listen to and note the quiet and stealthy animal life around you is, as I said, a fascination that cannot be put into words, and, should success reward you, the little discomfort undergone is amply paid for.

As dusk comes on, the cute old Silver Hackle Cock (generally known as the Grey Cock) may be seen to quietly fly on to a branch of a tree, and then with a flapping of wings and a lusty crow or two he is observed to settle down comfortably for the night. The pea-fowl returns slowly and cautiously from the outer edges of the jungle and flies up into the higher tree tops for his night's rest, and the night-jar flits about ghost-like under the *machan*, whilst the large long-eared owl regales you with his solemn moaning note as the moon rises gently above the dark hill in front of you, and throws its soft light over the gradually approaching stillness of the jungle around. This stillness is rudely broken by the sharp "bell" of the sambar in the dark gorge running up the side of the hill, and you now feel the big cat of the Indian jungles has started on his nightly prowl and is slowly making his way towards the remains of his overnight's feed. A jackal glides out of the shadows and circles round the carcass of the animal lying on the ground in front of your *machan*. You watch him closely, and he affords you a deal of amusement and entertainment by the

nervous manner in which he trots around the "kill," putting up his nose every now and again and scenting the air and staring hard into particular dark patches of jungle, endeavouring to see if the rightful owner of the tempting and tasty meal is by chance coming along. There are many false alarms, and he scurries off every few minutes only to return after another searching circle around. At last he trots up, snatches or bites off a small shred of meat, and off again to the shelter of a friendly bush. The temptation is irresistible, and he finally trots out more boldly and starts gulping down whatever flesh he can bite off, looking round over and over again till suddenly you see him stop and stare hard towards the jungle in front of you, and then with a droop of his tail he sneaks away as though he had seen a ghost.

You now grip your rifle, and strain your eyes to pierce the shadows under the large trees the jackal had pointed to; by degrees you make out the white chest and massive head of the long expected guest to the feast lying out in the pale patch of moonlight in front of you. He stares long and hard, and then stalks deliberately out into the white light and stands over his "kill," looking past it and in the direction of your tree. To move now or put your gun to your shoulder is fatal, as no movement, however slight, will escape those large yellow eyes. With a loud guttural sigh he puts his grand head down towards his "kill"; now is your time. The rifle rings out, and there is a loud roar and floundering about under your *machan*; a second report quickly follows, and the magnificent animal sinks down with a nasty gurgling growl; there is a sound of a gasp or two, and then all is still.

What a pleasurable feeling creeps over you after the almost painful tension of the last few moments, as you gaze down at the long dark object lying a short distance off. You can probably distinguish the white undersides of the animal, and begin to picture to yourself what a grand beast he will look by day-light. After a short time, if any of your men are within hail, you call them up and return to camp to a well deserved whisky and soda and a glorious

rest. Should you be far from camp, you will find your slumbers on the *machan* quite peaceful enough with thoughts of the fine beast you have bagged, lying within a few yards of you.

Personally, I think the pleasure and satisfaction of bagging a tiger over its "kill," though it may be equalled, cannot be beaten by the thrill of excitement that comes to one as the animal is seen approaching during a beat, guided carefully along by the stops on either side of the *machan*. Certainly I derive a good deal of pleasure in bringing a beat to a successful termination, but I must confess to a feeling almost amounting to pride in what jungle craft I own, when I succeed in outwitting the cutest and most cunning of the wild denizens of the Indian jungles. A sportsman who does not trouble to study the ways and temperament of the tiger had better keep to beating, and not attempt sitting up, as he will get ten tigers in beating for only one by sitting up.

Sanderson, who had great experience of both methods, in his interesting work, "Thirteen Years among the Wild Beasts of India," writes—"There is perhaps no method of shooting tigers so seldom successful as watching for their return to feed on animals they have killed. Almost every sportsman has tried it again and again, and solemnly vowed upon each occasion that it should be his last, generally only to be found at his post on the next tempting opportunity. For my own part I confess to a great liking for the silent and solitary watch; and as this description of shooting requires the exercise of the sportsman's utmost vigilance and patience, I have never felt any qualms as to its legitimacy. In a shady green *machan* in some fine tree, watching at the cool of evening—that always bewitching hour in the India day—when jungle-sounds alone break the stillness, and birds and animals, seldom seen at other times, steal forth, and can be watched at leisure—whilst intense excitement is kept alive by the possibility of the tiger's appearance at any moment—I have often wondered how any one can consider being perched upon a tree under a blazing sun whilst a tiger is being driven towards him,

sport, and used the term poaching in reference to this. How many men have killed their forty or fifty tigers who have never succeeded in bagging one by watching—the fair outwitting of the subtle beast on his own ground! Give him who prefers the horn and tomtom system his diabolical appliances, his calorific post; but the solitary watch in the hushed evening hours for the lover of nature, for him who can feel the true romance and poetry of solitude in the jungles. It was not until I had made many unsuccessful attempts to shoot tigers by watching—never even seeing one—and had cheerfully put down my want of success on each occasion to sheer bad luck, that I began to consider in the ample hours I had aloft for reflection, whether there might not be some mistakes in the arrangements we made for their reception to account for tigers never putting in an appearance, especially as any carcass that was not watched was always revisited. I then saw some of the errors we made, and since rectifying them have been fairly successful."

Sitting up for tigers in hopes of their returning to their "kills" is commented on by most authors of sporting books, and as it makes very interesting reading, I shall again quote from Forsyth's "The Highlands of Central India": "Generally there is at least one native in every circle of villages whose profession is that of "shikari," or hunter, and who is always on the look out to shoot the village tiger. When he hears of a bullock having been killed he proceeds to the spot, and, erecting a platform of leafy bough in the nearest tree, watches by night for the return of the tiger, who, though he may kill and lap the blood during the day, never feeds before sunset. Generally he does not get a shot, the tiger being extremely suspicious when approaching his "kill," and the shikaris being usually such bunglers at their work as to disturb him by the noise of their preparations. Often he misses when he does shoot, the jungle-king being somewhat trying to the nerves; and if he kills one tiger in the course of the year, he considers himself lucky. His weapon is a long matchlock, which he loads with six fingers of powder and two bullets. These

tiger, taking all the usual precautions, but only succeeded in getting one tiger and wounding another. This gentleman appears to have had bad luck, as also Colonel V. M. Stockley who, in his book, "Big Game Shooting in India, Burma and Somaliland," says: "I have never shot a tiger by sitting up."

These extracts from works written by sportsmen of great experience are only inserted in support of my contention that it is quite as difficult to bag a tiger returning to its "kill" at night as it is to shoot one in a beat, and go to show that night shooting is not quite the "murder" it is made out to be by some people. There are many reasons to account for the frequent disappointments experienced in this method of shooting, and put briefly in their order of probability, they are as follows:—

- (1) The tiger has returned for his "kill," but something or other in its neighbourhood has made him suspicious, and he has sneaked away without giving the silent watcher a glimpse of himself.
- (2) He has not been able to break the tethering rope and drag the "kill" into cover, and imagining vultures have demolished it, he does not trouble to return, or does not fancy the spot it lies in.
- (3) He may have been disturbed whilst lying close up to the "kill," and becoming suspicious has gone off not to return.
- (4) He may have killed another animal whilst on his way to the "kill."

Any one of the above reasons may account for a tiger, that has not been fired at before over a "kill," not putting in an appearance. Every tiger kills with the intention of making the most of the animal he has killed, and in the ordinary course of things is sure to return to his "kill." This will always be found to be the case when a "kill" is not watched over, and with all natural "kills"; so the sportsman must set about finding out where the defects in

his preparations lie. At present I am taking the case of a tiger that the sportsman knows has never been fired at before over a "kill," for the procedure for a tiger that has been fired at and habitually refuses to return to "kills" that have been put out for him will be totally different.

To take reason No. 1 for the tiger not returning—The *machan* should not only be screened at the sides, but some bushy branches should be inserted in as natural a manner as possible in the slats underneath, taking care to prevent the whole contrivance looking like a large crow's nest, when it will be sure to catch the eye of the animal. Detection is less likely if a big tree with a thick trunk and heavy branches in good foliage is selected, and I have always found a tree on the further side of the "kill" is preferable to one on the side from which the animal is expected, as in the latter case he will, ten to one, stand and lie about in the dark shadows under your very tree for some time before he faces the open moonlit space in which his "kill" is lying. It is during this interval that he is bound to, sooner or later, become aware of your presence and the *machan*. It is hardly necessary to say that the sportsman must stay absolutely still at the first intuition he has of the animal's close proximity, as no sound or movement will escape his quick hearing or eyesight. There is no objection to a small smoke or two before the tiger is expected, provided the glowing end of the cigarette is carefully hidden, the *machan* is high enough and there is a bit of a breeze in the right direction to carry away the scent of the tobacco. The movement of lifting the rifle to the shoulder must be slow and deliberate, and only made when the animal's head is turned away.

Reason No. 2 for the tiger not returning—The sportsman, desirous of sitting up over a "kill," should select a fairly open spot in thin and light jungle for tying, and should there be no dense, heavy cover close by, can use a rope that the tiger can snap and so carry his "kill" further into the thin jungle to any spot he likes, when he will the more readily return to it. If the jungle is thick and heavy, the bait should be tied with a very strong rope,

short by the fore leg to some handy stump, so that the carcass will remain on the spot at which the animal has been killed. It is a good plan, when the tiger is known to be lying close by in thick cover, to keep some men sitting and talking in a natural way fairly close to but not right up against the "kill" till the arrival of the sportsman in the evening, prepared to take up his night's watch. Having the men staying near the "kill" all day keeps the tiger from looking it up, and possibly becoming suspicious and dragging it away out of shooting distance of the *machan* which has already been prepared. On the sportsman's arrival, and after he has climbed into his *machan*, these men should go away talking rather loudly amongst themselves, for if the tiger should happen to be close to the "kill" any stealthy and quiet movements on their part will make him suspect a trap. I have more than once, adopting this plan, found a tiger come out to look at his "kill" immediately on the departure of the men.

Should the tiger have dragged the "kill" into cover unfavourable for night shooting, or where there is no suitable tree for a *machan*, there is no objection to dragging it out into a more suitable spot, provided the drag is not too far and the carcass is visible from the place in which the tiger had left it. All native shikaris strongly object to the "kill" being moved, as they say that the tiger will not approach his "kill" if he sees it has been moved, but I attach no importance to this. There are circumstances where the sportsman has no option but to move it, and at the worst a tiger will only become a bit more cautious, and possibly be delayed in showing himself, but come out he will.

Before climbing into his *machan*, the sportsman should take a last look around to see that there are no ropes, axes or cut branches lying about, and should have all freshly cut stumps rubbed over with a little mud to prevent the white ends showing up in the moonlight. It is also a good plan to tie the carcass down to some handy stump or peg; if the latter, cover the rope over with a little grass.

Now for reason No. 3, for the tiger not returning—This is only applicable in cases when the noises go to make the animal suspicious. So long as too much noise is not made, the tiger believes that there is only a party of wood and grass-cutters who have accidentally come on the spot, and though he may temporarily move off, these every day noises to which he is accustomed will not deter him from returning to his “kill” at night. Broadly speaking, no unusual movements or noises should be made, to which the tiger is unaccustomed. A whisper will frighten a tiger much more than any ordinary talking, and a gently rustle more than a loud noise.

Reason No. 4—This is beyond the control of the sportsman, and is a contingency that should hardly be taken into account, as it so seldom occurs; the tiger having only a short distance to travel, and the night being young, there is not much chance of his getting a “kill” on the way.

For night shooting, a *machan* should not be less than eighteen feet from the ground, as the higher it is the less likely it is to be in the tiger’s direct line of sight, for he seldom looks upwards unless a movement or rustle attracts his attention. One cannot write of sitting up at night in the jungles without some reference to the annoying mosquito and other such pests. The ubiquitous mosquito is not so much to the fore on moonlight nights, but, if found too attentive, he can be repelled by rubbing a little lemon grass oil on to one’s hands and ears. The sportsman should see that his *machan* is not placed on a tree infected by ants, or he will have a rotten time of it.

It is very seldom indeed that one can rightly foretell the direction from which the tiger will approach his “kill,” as he has a nasty and common habit of turning up from where he is least expected, so the sportsman should never neglect to have the back of his *machan* screened just as thoroughly as the front and sides. Possibly the first intimation of the tiger’s presence is the sound of a low sigh under the *machan* itself, and he may be seen standing and staring hard at his “kill” and its surroundings.

Tigers will often return to their "kills" early in the afternoon, and will circle around within two hundred yards for hours, waiting for dusk or nightfall before they actually approach them. It is during this preliminary scouting that the sportsman and his *machan* is generally detected. At other times they will sit within thirty to forty yards of their "kills" for half an hour at a time without the smallest movement, and from behind a bush closely scrutinize every stick and stone in its immediate neighbourhood; this is the most anxious time for the man on the *machan*, who will have to exercise the greatest patience and endurance in keeping absolutely still. I have sometimes had tigers so close behind my *machan* as to be able to hear the rasp of their rough tongues being passed over pads and paws, and to hear their breathing, and yet not been able to see them.

A short time ago in the Mysore jungles, some men turned up and reported that a cow had been killed by a tiger that morning in a jungle four miles from my camp. My wife and I motored out to the spot, about four o'clock in the afternoon and climbed into a *machan* our men had put up on a small swaying tree, the only one conveniently situated near the "kill." We had hardly been seated half an hour, when my companion signed to me with her eyes to look behind, and whispered "There he is." On turning and looking round cautiously, I perceived a very fine tiger crossing a bit of open ground in some thin jungle about two hundred yards off. Any hopes I had of his giving me a good chance whilst it was still day-light were gradually dispelled as darkness slowly crept on, and just as I was beginning to think he was not going to put in an appearance at all, I saw a dark object slyly sneak out from behind a dense dark bush and stand over the "kill." How long he had been quietly sitting and listening there, I could not tell. As the animal lowered his head to grip the carcass in his jaws, I gave him the contents of the right barrel of my Paradox behind the shoulder, and followed it up quickly with the left. After a little floundering about on the ground he picked himself up and dashed off madly

for a short distance, only to suddenly fall dead within fifty yards. We were back in camp before nine o'clock.

A tiger may generally be expected to return to his "kill" any time before nine o'clock; if he does not show by then, there is just a chance of his returning near dawn. Should the jungle, in which the "kill" has occurred, be lonely and quiet, and not subject to disturbance from passers-by, a tiger will often return early in the afternoon. I have seen them come out at three o'clock. The season of the year is of course an important factor to be taken into account, and also the kind of day. Tigers are more active on cool and cloudy days.

Before concluding, I should like to strike a note of warning regarding the getting off the *machan* at night to go home. A grunt or roar followed by a headlong and mad rush usually denotes a rapid dissolution of the wounded beast, but still the sportsman is not justified in calling up his men to assist him down with his rifle, etc., from the *machan*, unless he has heard the heavy fall of the animal as it galloped away. Even then he should give it at least half an hour, and listen intently for any sounds denoting life; finding everything quite still, he may take it that the animal is dead. When the wounded animal goes off slowly, making very little sound in his retreat, the best plan for the sportsman is to resign himself to a night out, and curl up and go to sleep as best he can on his perch. In such cases the chances are, the animal, though he may be mortally wounded, will not die for some time, and is probably lying close up till he can get over the shock of his wound and move further off, even though it may be only to expire before morning.

Never be in a hurry to fire, but always wait till you are certain your bullet is being placed in the right spot; that is, fire to kill. Unless you do this you cannot be sure in the poor light how hard the animal is hit, and it should always be borne in mind that it is incumbent on every sportsman to do all he can to finish off any tiger that gets away wounded. Many a dreaded man-eater is the direct result of a hurried and badly aimed shot at night.

The sportsman, sooner or later, will find himself up against a tiger that will not return to his "kill." An animal of this kind is equally difficult to bag in a beat as he is to shoot at night, for he has a habit of clearing clean out immediately after his feed, making it impossible to mark him down closely enough for a beat with any prospects of success. If the history of this animal is gone into closely enough through inquiries from the local inhabitants, it will generally be found that he has been sometime or other fired at over a "kill" or in a beat, and it will also be found that the locality he inhabits owns a native shikari who is always sitting up at night for sambar, pig, etc. There is nothing more nerve-trying and irritating to a tiger than the sight of a man quietly perched up in a tree in the depths of his haunts, or over his pet drinking places.

I remember the case of a tiger that took four of my bullocks, and, hide and conceal my *machan* as well as I could, I found he always detected me. There was no doubt that he turned up on every one of these occasions, as in the mornings I could see from tracks that he had circled the *machan* and spotted me from a safe distance. This animal had an annoying habit of going away calling, as though in derision of my clumsy attempts at outwitting him, and probably chuckled to himself when he saw me get off and go home. The fifth bullock, however, was his undoing, as instead of sitting over the carcass I let it lie out in the open, and put up my *machan* quite fifty yards away in rather thin jungle. It was a bright moonlight night, and I was able to settle my little account with this over-educated tiger, when he passed under my tree during the preliminary circling and scouting he had always indulged in.

To return to the subject of tigers that will not return to "kills"—to deal with such a beast will require time and patience, and the only plan is to give him a bait tied with a thin rope, so that he can kill and do what he likes with the carcass, and to see that the drag is not followed up by any of your men. The animal will probably not visit the spot that night, but the next night he is almost sure to take a prowl around, and, seeing the "kill," will certainly be

tempted, though possibly he may not go up to it. Now give him another "kill" in exactly the same spot in which he got his last, and tied up in the same manner. Follow up this drag in the morning and tie out a fresh bait that very night within fifty to sixty yards of where he left his last "kill," and sit up over it. You will generally find this plan will get you your shot.

For the tiger that refuses to kill a tied out bait, you will usually find that the temptation to have a look at it is an irresistible one, so put up your *machan* fifty yards or so either above or below the live bait in the *nullah* or path, you see from tracks, he usually takes.

I cannot finish with the subject of night shooting without making some reference to the various appliances, in the way of electric lights, that are used on dark nights. I must, however, confess to not having had very much experience of these aids to night shooting, as I have only bagged one tiger and wounded another by the aid of such a light. The style of light used by me consists of a bulb, hung about four and a half to five feet directly over the "kill" from a handy bush, attached to coils of insulated wire stretching away to the *machan* and connecting up with a switch. One of these coils before being brought to the *machan* is connected up with my motor car battery, hidden at the foot of my tree. The button of the switch is pressed by my companion, generally my wife, directly any sounds are heard near the "kill," intimating the tiger has started on his meal. I cannot say that I am over pleased with this contrivance, as apart from the trouble of removing the battery from the car and carrying it all the way to the scene of the "kill," there is a great chance on gusty and windy nights of some wire or other getting disconnected. I had this occur on one occasion over a tiger I was very keen on bagging. A plentiful supply of dry cells might do away with the trouble of taking one's battery out of the car, but I find that these cells can never be relied on; a small accumulator properly charged before starting on the shoot is a capital contrivance. I had one that gave excellent results for a whole winter with only its initial charge. I

have never liked the other system of tying a cylindrical electric torch to the barrel of my gun, as I found the projected shaft of light too narrow to be of any use.

I seldom worry about sitting up for tiger during the dark nights, and for ordinary moonlight shooting, I find a small piece of white cotton wool, tied with a bit of white thread over the foresight, answers satisfactorily. I never use any weapon but a double-barrel with flush back sights.

When it is past the full moon, and a tiger is expected to return to his "kill" in the dark before the moon rises, I never hesitate to keep him off by getting four or five men to build a fire within a hundred yards of the "kill," and order them to sit and talk around it till the moon rises, and then to go away. I have done this twice, and on each occasion felt the tiger's presence long before the moon rose, and heard him loitering about, waiting for the men to go, and shortly after their departure, have seen him walk out. This procedure, however, can only be adopted with daring cattle-lifters, who are used to the presence of men and have no fear so long as they consider themselves well hidden from view. I do not think this little plan would succeed with the shy game-killer, who, I expect, would clear out altogether no sooner he saw or heard men within sight of his "kill."

Though I have not seen it myself, I know some forest officials in Mysore have been successful in catching a tiger every now and again in pits for stocking the Zoo of the Maharajah of Mysore. The *modus operandi*, as explained to me by a Range Officer, was as follows:—A pit, eight feet square by fourteen feet in depth, was dug in some natural tiger lead, and was surrounded on three sides by a heavy and impenetrable fence of thorns. The fence facing the one open side being made far enough from the edge of the pit to allow of a young buffalo being tethered between it and the pit, the latter being cleverly covered over with bamboos laid across it, with a final dressing of mud and grass to resemble as closely as possible the ground outside the enclosure. The general idea is to entice the tiger into

making a rush at the buffalo through the one open side of the fence and over the hidden pit, the roofing of which is not strong enough to bear his weight. After it is found that the tiger has been safely caught in the pit, a high and strong palisade of stout timber is erected close around the edges of the pit, leaving only a small gap on one side. A strong cage with iron bars is wheeled up to and fitted into this gap, with a trap door suitably arranged, facing over the pit. Everything being ready, a ladder is let down at night, leading from the door down into the pit. The poor hungry and trapped beast climbs at night up the ladder into the cage, and finds the door has been constructed in such a manner as to fall and shut him in immediately a spring is released by his entry into the cage.

This Ranger told me that he had already caught three fine tigers by this method, but now was anxious for some advice from me to outwit an enormous tiger that refused to be taken in. In a very important manner he drew out from his pocket and showed me a paper on which was a rough drawing, done by himself, of the pug marks of this animal, drawn, he asserted, the exact size of the actual marks he had measured in the sand. It struck me the tiger whom the pug marks of the drawing could fit must be the size of a house at least. However much I disliked the idea of a fine beast like a tiger being caught in a pit, I had to be polite, and told him he could not do better than he was doing, as possibly the day might come when hunger would outweigh the tiger's caution.

On another occasion, also in Mysore, a Mohamedan, considered a great shikari in the locality, stopped me whilst I was motoring, and asked if I would care to shoot a panther that he had caught the previous night in a trap baited with a poor pariah dog. Needless to say I refused to oblige him, and told him to do his dirty work himself.

Up to this I have only written of the tiger and the interesting and enjoyable sport he affords, and now must not forget that a few remarks are necessary regarding the preserving of the trophy he yields to the lucky sportsman, and shall give this matter a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TIGER—(*concluded*).

THE TROPHY.

A good sportsman does not kill for the mere pleasure of killing, and will always like to have something tangible to remind him of and make him live over again the hours spent in the pursuit of the different animals he has succeeded in bringing to bag, be they hours of which he has fond memories or the reverse. Every trophy has a story attached to it, and amongst the trophies, which India offers to the keen and hard-working sportsman, none is grander or more pleasing to the eye than that of the animal I am writing about.

Probably, every sportsman has a formula of his own, which he applies towards the preservation of his trophies, and I shall therefore only give a description of the method adopted by myself, leaving it to the reader to follow or not as he wishes.

To begin with, the skin of the dead tiger has to be removed as quickly as possible after it has been shot, and I would advise the sportsman, unless he has experienced men with him, to get in from the nearest village at least four "*chamars*" to do this part of the job. These "*chamars*" are a low caste of Hindus who do the skinning of all animals that die in the village, and from constant practice are quick and thorough in their work; handling their sharp and curiously shaped implements with marvellous precision, they never cut and damage the skin, as less experienced hands are likely to do. The personal direction and supervision of the sportsman is nevertheless necessary, as the men have possibly never skinned a tiger before, and the process of taking off the hide of a bullock, to which they are accustomed, is very different. The guiding lines along which the skin has to be cut should be clearly marked out with charcoal after turning the animal over on its back.

The first cut should be through the centre of the under lip along the chin, chest and stomach, right down to the end of the tail. The next two cuts should be along the inside of the forelegs, from the chest right up to and through the large centre pad of the foot, taking care that an equal amount of white is left on either side of the cut. Similar incisions should be made along the inner sides of the hind legs, and here also care should be taken that the cuts are along the centre of parts covered with white hair.

The skin can now be taken off easily, care only being necessary when skinning the head. Deep incisions should be made to allow of the whole cartilage of the ears and nose coming away with the skin, and to also bring away the eyelids without cutting them. Any heavy bloodstains around wounds should be thoroughly removed by means of a wet rag, as these stains, unless removed at this stage, will show up badly when the skin is cured by the taxidermist. All superfluous flesh and fat should be carefully cut away, and, after spreading out a thin layer of dry grass or straw sprinkled over with wood ashes as a preventative against white-ants and damp, the skin should be pegged out symmetrically over it in some good shade. Wire nails, four inches or more in length, are especially suitable for pegging out skins, and not less than sixty are required for that of a tiger. The skin should not be unduly stretched to attain length at the cost of breadth, men being put on opposite sides to stretch and peg out the skin uniformly. A thick pad of straw should be thrust under the head to prevent any creasing, and the ears should be turned inside out. Men should now be put to cleaning out the pads of each foot thoroughly, and this is not to be considered really done until every claw stands out from its sheath, freed of all sinews and tissue; the cartilage of the ears should be skinned right up to the tips, and removed; the lips should be opened out and thinned as much as possible, and all flesh removed from around the eyes and nose. To do all the above is very troublesome and tedious work, and is likely to be shirked by the men if not watched over closely.

The skin is now ready for treatment, and as this treatment differs with prevailing atmospheric conditions, I shall start with describing what it should be for hot dry weather. Finely powdered salt and alum in equal quantities should be mixed and well rubbed into the stretched out skin, and, to do this properly and thoroughly, a piece of wood or a fairly smooth stone is preferable to the palm of the hand. As the salt and alum draws out and absorbs the moisture exuding from the skin, they should be thrown away and a fresh lot rubbed in. After half an hour's rubbing the skin may be left alone to dry with a good layer of the mixed powders filling all hollows and depressions in lips, ears, nose, etc., and, as it dries, any thin film of flesh, that may have been left behind, will stand out, and can easily be pulled off. Periodical applications of alum and salt will be necessary for the next forty-eight hours, before the expiry of which time the skin should not be lifted. It should be carefully protected from dew at night and sun in the day. A thick layer of dry grass or straw will answer the purpose, but this covering should be removed at the earliest opportunity to allow of the air playing on the skin. After the skin has been taken up, it should be put out for many days in good shade for airing; throwing it over a branch of a tree is a good plan. If any nasty odour should be noticed round the ears, nose or pads, these parts should be touched up with a solution of arsenical soap; the sportsman should, however, bear in mind that his main object is to get the skin to dry as quickly as possible, so that his application of arsenical soap must not be more moist than is required to rub it in.

The above treatment is practically the same as recommended by the well-known taxidermists of Southern India, Messrs. Van Inge & Van Ingen of Mysore, and is applicable for both hot and cold weather provided the atmosphere is dry. If by any chance salt and alum are not available, clean wood ashes make a good substitute, and if well rubbed in, will be found to absorb moisture quite well, which after all is the most important aim of the sportsman, till the pelt can be packed off to the curers.

In damp and rainy weather it is quite impossible to get skins to dry at all, so the sportsman should try and get them off to the taxidermist as quickly as possible. To do this I have found the system recommended by the firm, above named, to be quite satisfactory. The skin should be taken off the dead animal at the earliest moment possible, and only a perfunctory removal of superfluous flesh adhering to it is necessary. The inner side of the pelt should be well coated with a plentiful supply of alum and salt, and the skin rolled up with as much of these two ingredients as it will hold, and left alone for about twelve hours, when the salt will be found to have become liquid. This is now removed and a plentiful supply of fresh stuff is again packed into the skin, which, rolled up, can then be put away into a basket and sent off to the taxidermist, or stowed away till convenient to do so.

I remember a day in the height of the rains, when I had bagged two tigers and was doubtful whether I could get the reeking skins away in time to the taxidermists. I treated and packed them as above described, but being too far away from any railway station, was obliged to keep them for over a fortnight before I could send them off by train to Mysore in Southern India, all the way from the Central Provinces where I happened to be shooting at the time. The skins were in due course returned to me by the taxidermists, beautifully done, and without any of the hair having slipped.

The masks of deer that are required for trophies should be cut along the back of the neck to the base of the skull, and from there two cuts should diverge to the horns. These masks should never be cut along the underside from the chin to the base of the neck, as, if this is done, the stitching, joining up the cut in the finished head, will always look unsightly.

Before I forget, I might mention that there is no harm done if the moustaches of tigers and panthers get loose during the drying process; if this should occur, they should be taken out and kept by the sportsman and sent along with the skin to the taxidermists, who will easily put them in

again. The skull of the tiger should be put into an empty tin and boiled with a fistful of lime dissolved in the water till the flesh can be easily pulled off from the bones. Another plan, if the sportsman is not pressed for time, is to bury the head until the flesh drops off: still another way is to put the skull on or near a nest of black ants, who will clean it thoroughly in an incredibly short time.

Writing on the subject of these skulls reminds me of the fact that the "lucky bones" are well worth extracting and keeping, as they make very pretty brooches. They are to be found embedded in flesh and muscle at the points of the shoulders, alongside the base of the neck. Natives attach a great deal of value to these bones, and as they are rather difficult to find, it is amusing to hear the skinner occasionally trying to convince you that no such bones exist.

I do not think that any article on the shooting of tigers can be complete without some hints as to the treatment of wounds received from these animals. Every sportsman is well aware of the fact that most serious complications, in the way of sepsis and blood poisoning, may arise through the smallest wound inflicted by the claws or teeth of these carnivores, and I do not think that a few words of advice here will be amiss as to first aid treatment, should a sportsman be unlucky enough to have either himself or any of his men mauled.

The first thing to be done is to get the wounds well washed out with water with the least possible delay, opening the wounds well out with the fingers for want of a syringe. Immediately on arrival in camp, syringe the wounds out well with a solution of Iodide of Mercury, putting in one tabloid to about one quart of water. Then soak some small pieces of lint or clean white cotton cloth, and, folding them into pads, dip them in the mercury solution and lay them on the wounds, covering them with clean cotton wool, and then finally bandage up. The dressings should not be touched till the following day, unless there is a lot of discharge, when they should be changed. If a wound is very deep, it should be lightly packed with a thin strip of gauze or

soft cloth dipped in the mercury solution, in order to keep it open and allow it to heal up from the base for, if the top heals, leaving a hole underneath, the wound will suppurate and give a lot of trouble, and sinuses are likely to occur. After the discharge stops, dress the wound every second or third day, and, discarding the pads soaked in mercury lotion, dust the wounds well with Boracic Acid powder.

Spirits, though not good for the wound, should be given every few hours to guard against the effects of shock to the system, which in many cases is the direct cause of death. After first aid treatment it is always advisable to get the man away to a hospital as soon as possible should the wounds be severe, taking care that no crude native remedies such as tobacco, lime, turmeric, etc., are surreptitiously applied by the patient's friends and relations.

To meet emergencies of this nature, I always carry with me on a shoot, a glass syringe, a bottle of Iodide of Mercury tabloids, some Boracic Acid powder, a little Iodoform, Tincture of Iodine, some lint, absorbent cotton wool, a little gauze, and a few bandages. I am, however, glad to be able to say that except on two occasions, I have never had need to indent on this store. One case in which it was necessary to do so was that of a man, who, through his own foolishness and disobedience of orders, was mauled by a crusty old bear I was trying to beat out of a rocky hill. This man was very successfully treated by my wife, and the large gaping wounds in his side, inflicted by the bear's teeth, healed up in a marvellous manner. The other when I was mauled by a bear myself.

In the case of wounds inflicted by carnivores, it is of vital importance that not even the smallest scratch should be overlooked.



CHAPTER V. THE MAHARAJ.*

A ROMANCE OF TIGERLAND.

A small herd of cattle, grazing contentedly in the glade, harmonized with the general atmosphere of peace and quiet of the magnificent salt forest that shut in the clearing. The soft tinkle of bells, suspended from the necks of some of the animals, only accentuated the peacefulness of the surroundings, and was drowsily listened to by old Muria Gond and his little nephew Gariba, who were seated at the edge of the clearing; one engrossed in meditations regarding the price of rice and *ragi*, and the other in shaping himself a stick from a young bamboo.

The scene is laid in one of the eastern districts of the Central Provinces; a district that prided itself on possessing some of the grandest forests to be found in the whole of the Indian Peninsula, and the exceptionally fine list of big

* A term of address signifying almost royalty, and applied to men of high caste and importance by those of lower caste, and also very often applied to any famous tiger of a particular locality.

† *The Shorea robusta*.

game it had to offer the keen sportsman. Its tigers were reputed to be extra heavy and large, and better antlers, both on sambar and spotted deer, were not to be had elsewhere, whilst its bison were not to be beaten in size or span of horn except by a few exceptional ones to be found in Burmah.

It was getting on towards dusk, and the cattle were beginning to face and graze homewards, and old Muria had picked up his ragged blanket and axe, preparatory to a move, and called out to Gariba to bestir himself, when, suddenly, there was a great stampede amongst the cattle, and a few of the stragglers that were feeding within the fringe of the jungle rushed pell-mell into the clearing. Infirm old Muria took in the situation at a glance, and rushed with a shout in the direction from where the frightened beasts had emerged, but involuntarily drew up short on being confronted with the sight of a fine bullock lying on its side with a monster tiger standing over it. Muria was no coward, and the plight of the black bullock, the property of Parmanand, the local headman and close fisted money-lender, made him hesitate scarcely a moment; with raised axe and a lusty shout he made straight for the tiger. All would have been well with Muria had the animal only been a bit further off when the old man appeared on the scene, for its instinctive and inherited fear of man would have made the beast bound away into the depths of the forest, but, being surprised at close quarters, it turned savagely on the puny human intruder. I shall draw a curtain over what actually happened; little Gariba, peering round a bush from a safe distance, was the only eye witness; spellbound, he gazed, and then fled; a huddled mass lay stretched out close to the black bullock, and a large striped cat stalked slowly and defiantly away into the forest.

With pitiful cries, Gariba sped along the narrow jungle path that led to the small forest-surrounded hamlet of Chandapur. The cattle had arrived there before him, rushing in a terrified and snorting mass towards the village, and even before Gariba's arrival the inhabitants

instinctively knew that a tiger was the cause of this disturbance, but they were bewildered and stunned to hear that old Muria had been struck down by the beast. Such a thing had never occurred in their jungles before; tigers had never had the temerity to dispute their "kills" with human beings, but had always fled on any one of their community rushing to the rescue of a fallen bullock or cow. "Why, only two months ago, had not Roop Singh, the Sub-Inspector of Police of Malapur, ten miles distant, rid them of a sneaking and cowardly thief of a tiger, that had taken heavy toll of their herds? Roop Singh had sat up in a tree over the carcass of Barka's cow, and easily shot the coward, as he sneaked out one moonlight night to resume his feast on the animal he had killed the previous evening. This tiger must assuredly be of quite a different nature and would have to be respected in future; he seemed to be an unusual specimen of those that periodically strolled over to them from Amarkantak, the reputed native place of nearly all tigers which frequent the Central Provinces."

After a deal of noisy talk and chatter, the whole of the male inhabitants, numbering only ten souls in all, repaired to the scene, led by Gariba, and on coming to the spot they found poor Muria lying on his face, just as his nephew had described, and with two fearful wounds in his chest and side. They gently bent over the old man and turned him over, when to their surprise he lifted one arm and, pointing to the body of the black bullock, uttered the name of Parmanand. After this he said no more, and by the time they had lifted him on to a village string cot they plainly saw the old fellow's soul had fled from its lean and shrunken shell. They bore the body in mournful silence back to the village and made it over to the old man's daughter and a crowd of weeping and wailing women, who buried it next day on the outskirts of the village paddy fields.

The men went out next morning and brought in the dead bullock, but were surprised to find his "kill" had not been touched or even revisited by the tiger. Though

this seemed extraordinary behaviour to them, it did not stir their apathetic natures to any great extent; the usual village life flowed on as before, and Muria's death was only remembered as an unpleasant incident. The cattle were kept away for a whole week from that particular glade, but, as the grazing there was extra good, gradually they were taken closer and closer to it, till one evening a sleek cow was seized, and the herdsman was intimidated in his attempt to drive the tiger off by threatening growls from an adjacent thicket. This cattle-lifting became of more frequent occurrence in different parts of the neighbouring jungles, and, as the tiger began to show less respect for man and sometimes even made a noisy demonstration of charging the herdsman, the villagers were at last roused to think out some plan of ridding themselves of the unpleasant guest that had taken up his quarters in their jungles.

The last tiger shot there had cost them just ten rupees, which had been subscribed and collected and then made over to Roop Singh before he would undertake to shoot the animal. Rupees were scarce just now and hard to part with, but yet the Maharaj, as they had now come to call their persecutor, was costing them more in the heavy toll he regularly exacted from their herds. A meeting was called in the house of Parmanand in which it was decided that, if the money-lender would put down five rupees, the villagers between them would raise the remaining five to pay Roop Singh to shoot the animal. The idea was an excellent one, and next morning two of their number walked the ten miles to Malapur, fully assured that Roop Singh would come to their assistance.

Now, Roop Singh, a redoubtable slayer of green pigeon, jungle fowl and occasionally a spotted deer doe, and living on the reputation of the one tiger he had potted, put a higher price on his prowess than the poor villagers could rise to. "Ten rupees!!" said he, "Do you miserable Gonds* imagine for a moment, that for a paltry ten rupees

* One of the races of Central India.

I shall risk my life in shooting a tiger that has already killed a man? Go home and bring me ten more rupees, and then I shall do my best to help you. And don't forget, I shall also want ten seers (20 lbs.) of pure ghee (clarified butter) from your village, besides two seers of good milk daily during the time I spend in your wretched hovels. If I am killed, what is to happen to my family? I shall lose the pension I am working for to keep me in my old age. I shall keep this money, and when you have added a further ten rupees to it I shall come to Chandapur and slay the Maharaj."

Roop Singh, besides being pompous and avaricious, remembered the terrible roar with which the only tiger he had ever bagged greeted his shot, before floundering off to fall dead. That recollection sent a cold shiver down his back, and he felt he was not asking too much for undergoing the same terrifying sensation he had experienced on that occasion. He was obstinate, and the deputation were obliged to return, dejected and disappointed, to their homes.

Matters went fast from bad to worse in miserable, tiger-haunted Chandapur, and in fact were getting intolerable, when the Maharaj brought things to a climax by killing in one and the same evening two more valuable bullocks belonging to Parmanand. Another meeting was convened, when Parmanand in a magnanimous manner announced that he would produce from his own pocket the extra ten rupees that Roop Singh had stipulated for, and from his own hoard produce the ten seers of "ghee" to clinch the arrangement with the grasping police subordinate.

There was great jubilation in the village next morning when the deputation again set forth for Malapur, carrying with them the "ghee" and ten rupees; the Maharaj was as good as dead. It was not possible that Roop Singh with his long upturned moustaches and double-barrel gun could fail. "They had heard of young European sahebs,*

* Gentlemen.

without a hair on their lips or chins, shooting great tigers like the Maharaj with guns that fired bullets no thicker than the pens with which Parmanand wrote up his ledgers. Roop's gun took a fist-full of fine powder and bullets the size of hen's eggs. No, it was not possible that the Maharaj could survive much longer, when the 'thanadar saheb' (outpost police officer) had decreed that he should die."

Roop Singh knew better, and did not have the same faith in either his own nerve or the shooting qualities of his gun, but yet, pocketing the money, he intimated his intention of visiting Chandapur during the ensuing moonlight nights. With this promise the villagers had to be content, and, being a patient and long-suffering lot, they did not complain, and decided to await the big man's pleasure. One day, when the moon was nearing its second quarter, the great man arrived in the bullock cart that Parmanand had been ordered to send for him. He was the honoured guest of the little village, and fared remarkably well whilst waiting for the first kill to occur, over which he intended to sit up.

His assumed impatience was not tried too much, as on the third evening after his arrival the Maharaj struck down an aged bullock that had lagged behind one evening when the herd was returning to the village. It was already dusk, and nothing could be done that night, but the whole community went in search of the "kill" early next morning. They had not to search far for it as it was come across, lying partially eaten, in a small *nullah* that separated the large Government forest from a stretch of thin scrub jungle, and a *machan* (platform of sticks) was duly tied up on a conveniently situated tree which overlooked the "kill."

Late, the same afternoon, Roop Singh comfortably settled himself with two local inhabitants as companions in the *machan* to await the return of the Maharaj to his "kill."

The hours dragged slowly on, and nothing beyond a skulking jackal or two was seen by the watchers, and

gradually Roop Singh resigned himself to the improbability of getting in his pot shot at the tiger during day-light. When the sun had set, and long dark shadows were being thrown by the moon, he was startled by a loud "bell" from a sambar stag, coming down the low hill at the back of the *machan*. The sambar's startled call was answered by a low and surly "A-oongh" and a soft purring growl, and even Roop Singh knew that the Maharaj was approaching. He grasped his old gun nervously and felt his two companions sidle up closer to him as though for comfort. There was deadly silence in the jungle, and he began to wonder how much longer his nerves could stand the strain and suspense, when there was the faintest sound of a stealthy football on the fallen leaves right under his tree, and, shortly after, the Maharaj walked out into the moonlit space and stood over his "kill."

He was magnificent, and the three watchers in the *machan* had no idea a tiger could look so superb and awe-inspiring. There was some violent nudging and whispering on the part of the two villagers, begging of Roop Singh to fire. The Maharaj immediately turned round, and his large yellow eyes fixed themselves on the *machan*, endeavouring to pierce the screen of leaves with which it was hidden. A glorious chance, but, alas, allowed to slip through sheer funk on the part of the man holding the gun: the bullet that should have lodged in the broad white chest went harmlessly singing by, and only inflicted a superficial flesh wound on the point of the Maharaj's shoulder. The valiant Roop Singh closed his eyes to shut out the sight of an enraged tiger launching itself impotently with diabolical fury against the tree. The roar that followed when it came to the ground, unable to reach the *machan*, turned his "liver to water" (his own expression); another two low growls, and the animal had bounded into the forest.

The three watchers breathed again, and congratulated themselves on having built their *machan* so well out of reach. "He will die. I have hit him badly. To-morrow you will find him dead. But, by the sacred Nerbudda, I

have never seen such a *Shaitan* (devil) of a tiger before." This was the sort of conversation that went on all night over the "kill," lying out in the silvery moonlight on the edge of that dark and gloomy forest.

The men in the village had heard the shot, and not till they arrived in a body in the morning, did the three men get down from their perch, and then a search for blood tracks was commenced. There was blood in plenty, but as the tracks led into the heavy reserved forests, where it would have been foolhardy to follow them, the men wisely decided to leave the beast alone, and had to be content with Roop Singh's repeated assurances that the tiger could not survive the wound inflicted by his gun. On returning to the village, Roop Singh packed up his belongings and started homewards for Malapur, quite satisfied with himself and puffed up with pride at the thanks showered on him by the simple villagers.

The Maharaj loitered and hung about that locality for four days, giving vent to his rage by loud calling at night, and though tigers are said not to be gifted with reasoning powers, yet it began to dawn on him that a serious attempt had been made on his life; his defiant attitude towards men gradually gave place to a great suspicion; he no longer felt safe in that jungle, and suspected a trap at every turn. His wound was only a slight one, but yet he decided to quit his old haunts, and in consequence moved on. The villagers, not hearing him any more, or coming across his tracks, came to the conclusion that the Maharaj had succumbed to his wounds, after crawling into some impenetrable fastness known only to himself.

II.

It would be a hopeless task to try and follow this animal through his restless wanderings after he was wounded. When he had first arrived and taken up his quarters in the Chandapur jungles he was raw and inexperienced, and inclined to be rash and over confident in his strength and the awe he inspired amongst human beings. He had lived a careless and happy life for two

years with his mother and sister in and around the beautiful and lonely gorges and hills of Amarkantak; his safety assured by the vigilance of the old tigress. All he did was to revel in the glorious feasts on the game and cattle she provided for him. But only a year back, a restlessness had come over the tigress, and she and her cubs had started on their wanderings through vast forest tracts, never taking up their abode in any one spot for any length of time, always moving on, and experiencing their lean, as well as, days of plenty.

It was during one of these nocturnal wanderings, when passing through the Chandapur forests, that he had lagged behind and strayed off on to a narrow jungle path. This was an important turning point in his life, as he was fated never to see his mother and sister again, for they passed out of his life altogether. Half a mile down this narrow path he suddenly came on a bullock, astray in the dark forest. A little preliminary scouting, and then the stealthy but rapid rush—the prize was his.

He gloated over his "kill," and, after eating his fill and concealing the carcass under a thick bush, slunk away at dawn to lie up during the heat of the day. He hung around his "kill" for a couple of days, during which he returned nightly and dined till all was finished. "Kill" followed "kill" in quick succession, and finding this a land of plenty he took up his permanent abode in the grand heavy forests surrounding Chandapur, and up to the time he had been caught red-handed by old Muria Gond, he had never challenged the rightful ownership of the cattle he killed. Muria had sprung a surprise on him, and it was as much through fear of being attacked himself as through viciousness that he had struck down the old man.

There is no denying the satisfaction and conceit he felt in the easy manner with which he had overpowered the wretched human being; he became conscious of his own strength, and more defiant of the puny human race, till he learnt the lesson taught him by Roop Singh. His temperament underwent a marked change, and his

instinctive cunning became more highly developed. Man, he saw, was to be avoided if possible, as he was capable of greater cunning and more powerful than he had before considered possible. This lesson was not easily forgotten, and for the future he never returned to a "kill" without first subjecting the surroundings to a very close and careful scrutiny; a bush, that had been lately cut, or another that had the foliage unsettled and turned wrong side up, was enough to send him sneaking away; no meal could be enjoyed where the natural surroundings round his "kill" were not the same as when he last left the spot.

The seasons rolled on, and Nature and the jungles were kind to the Maharaj, whilst his cunning grew as his body developed. He got into no more scrapes, and for three years had led a luxurious and easy life in a fine forest which held everything to satisfy his tastes. He had wandered far, but had a leaning towards his old forest home of Chandapur, so that we find him settled in a forest of the same nature as Chandapur, and only some fifty miles distant from that place.

There was an abundance of game to be had, and the village cattle, that were brought to the outskirts to graze, now and again provided him with a meal. The particular stretch of forest, he most frequented, was an ideal home for him. There was a narrow but perennial stream running through its length, with cool and heavy scrub jungle on its banks, and there were also some low and thickly wooded hills further back; hills in which he could take refuge in an emergency, and from which nothing could dislodge him. There were some small pools of water in the thickest parts of the forest, pools that held water throughout the winter months, and only dried up when the long fierce summer set in. Those little pools were favourite wallowing grounds of the large sambar and barasinga* stags when the frosty cold nights of December came round, and many a fine animal had he surprised in the early hours when it was enjoying its mud bath.

* Literally means twelve points. Here the swamp deer is referred to.

Failures of course were many, when his sly and stealthy approach was detected, and the grand old sambar roused the dark forest with his clanging "bell" of alarm, or the barasinga sent forth his raucous call. Yet, on the whole, he managed to subsist quite easily, especially as large sounders of pig, that came to root around about these pools, afforded him an easy prey.

Man, in his quest for jungle products, such as bamboo and grass for his dwellings and wild fruit and honey as an addition to his usual meagre fare, was often heard or come across; but the Maharaj avoided him and slunk away, remembering the salutary lesson given him by Roop Singh. He was by now in his prime, and a splendid specimen of the larger felidae of the jungles. The only blemish on his beautiful coat was the long scar, left by Roop Singh's bullet on his shoulder.

Though he lived in a land of plenty, the range of his wanderings was large, as he had a round of pet spots which he regularly visited; a circuit of anything between twenty to twenty-five miles; only a few days and a "kill" or two at each was his usual programme, giving his prey a respite and so not frightening them away altogether. The jungles of Arampur were however his favourite haunts, and he would, after an absence of a fortnight or so, return and luxuriate in the good things awaiting him there. Cowherds, he would find, had got slack, and some poor buffalo or bullock had been forgotten in the forest when the rest of the herd had returned to the village; the game, that had begun to get scared, had settled down again peacefully. Those Arampur jungles were indeed glorious.

During one of the animal's halts at Arampur, W—had come round to camp at the village and attend to the aligning of a new road that was to pass through the heart of those jungles. W—was a keen sportsman, and, on his arrival at Arampur, the malguzar,* patel† and others came to pay their respects, and in course of conversation informed

* Landholder.

† Headman.

him of the Maharaj's presence in their jungles. "*A bhari bagh, Huzur* (A heavy tiger, your Honour), and so big that we are frightened to try and shoot him. Our guns are not powerful enough. The very sight of him makes men's knees knock together." W—— was regaled with such and many other wondrous and fearful descriptions of the Maharaj. He had been seen on a few occasions at dusk by cowherds and wood-cutters, and though he never harmed or attacked any human beings, he also never spared their herds, and a long list of cattle-lifting episodes was registered against him. There was no doubt in the villagers' minds that the local shikari, Kandhai Gond, with the aid of Tulshi Baiga, would get W—— a shot at the beast. There was not a patch in the jungle that Kandhai was not conversant with, and Tulshi was an adept at getting animals killed through his incantations and prayers to the jungle spirits; they felt sure these two men were quite competent to outwit this tiger, when they were backed by W—— and his battery of powerful rifles and guns.

Kandhai and Tulshi were accordingly produced before W——, and deep plans for circumventing the Maharaj were discussed that evening. Kandhai was of the opinion that the jungles were rather too heavy for beating, but if things were managed quietly and cleverly, with the help of a little luck W—— might get a shot at night over a "kill." Tulshi, on the other hand, had no faith in sitting up at night, and in a mysterious and solemn way informed W—— that if he would allow him to sacrifice a goat and pour two bottles of strong liquor, procurable at Ram Din's shop in the village, over the feet of his jungle god, he would guarantee to drive the Maharaj up to W——'s gun in a beat.

Tulshi's suggestions were turned down with a smile, both because W—— felt he could dispense with the help of the forest god and also because he knew the offering would not be made to the deity, but would be appropriated by Tulshi himself. Kandhai's little plan, on the other hand, looked promising, so early next morning he sallied out with the two men, and was conducted to a spot in the forest where four jungle paths met, said to be a favourite

prowl of the tiger. A scrutiny of the ground disclosed the fact that the Maharaj had, sometime during the previous night, come down one of these paths to the junction, and, after cleaning his claws by running them down the soft bark of a tree that grew there, had gone up another path that led over a low hill to the cool scrub jungle on the banks of the stream. W—— liked the look of the place, and ordered a juicy young buffalo to be tied that night at the junction of the roads, selecting a leafy tree to put up his *machan*, should a "kill" occur.

A "kill" was duly reported next day, and a cleverly constructed *machan* was put up and well screened from view; in this *machan* W—— took up his lonely watch just before dusk. It was a cloudless moonlight night, and things looked very black indeed for the Maharaj; his fate was practically sealed, as there was no Roop Singh this time to bungle the shot and let him off.

The long night wore on, but the Maharaj put in no appearance, and at dawn it was a very cramped and weary man that descended from that *machan* and trudged home, not in the best of tempers. W—— felt convinced that the tiger had somehow become aware of his presence, and so did not show up. He puzzled his head in vain to think of any unguarded moment when he might have moved or fidgetted in his long watch and so given himself away; but no, he could not account for the unsatisfactory turn events had taken.

It was simply one of those interpositions of bad luck come across in jungle life, against which there is no fighting; simply a case of the devil looking after his own. The element of luck, as all sportsmen know, plays a great part in the lives of the denizens of the jungles, both in the doings of the hunter and the hunted. The Maharaj, as it happened, was on his way to the "kill" shortly after dusk, when he came across and killed a young sambar stag, and then his old "kill" at the junction lost all interest and attraction for him. He stayed by and ate the sambar at different times throughout the night, whilst poor W—— held his weary and lonesome watch.

Kandhai Gond was now out of favour, and Tulshi Baiga with his plausible proposals was listened to with more patience. A beat began to look promising, and, as the full co-operation of the Baiga was essential, W—— decided to humour him and let him have his goat and two bottles of the fiery decoction sold by Ram Din, besides a couple of cocoanuts and a white cock, which Tulshi now added to the list of indispensables required to properly cheer the heart of his jungle god, who Tulshi alleged, was very wrath at having been ignored up to now and was protecting the tiger's life. W—— took no interest in how the wily Tulshi disposed of the good things made over to him, as he knew well the humbug of the whole proceedings. Had he followed the man's doings, he could not have helped but notice that, though there was a deal of sham in the propitiation of his god, Tulshi was sincere in the faith and importance he attached to the ceremony.

That afternoon, the Baiga might have been seen leading the goat and carrying the cock, liquor, etc., to a small clearing in the depths of the forest, where a battered old stone image leant against the trunk of a hoary old tree. Here after prostrating himself before the stone, he slew the goat and cock, and when he had sprinkled the ground at the foot of the image with some blood and a few drops of liquor, he gathered together his offerings and carried all back to his house, and made them over to his wives—who by the way numbered three. Picking up his axe he went off with a young buffalo, to tie up for the tiger.

From this wild man of the forests the jungles held no secrets; every nook and corner was as well-known by him as the palm of his hand. He proceeded to a spot on the banks of the stream and tied up the buffalo most invitingly for the Maharaj, when he should prowl along one of his favourite walks. For two nights there was no "kill," but on the morning of the third day Tulshi's eyes lit up with joy when, coming to inspect his tethered bait, he saw it had been taken, and the drag left on the ground clearly indicated that the carcass had been pulled by the tiger into the very patch of jungle Tulshi desired.

News of the "kill" was quickly brought to W——, and about a hundred men from the village and surrounding hamlets collected as beaters. About midday, when the Maharaj was expected to be lying up asleep in the jungle, gorged after his heavy meal, the patch was quietly surrounded by the beaters who were to drive him towards the spot where W—— had taken up his position in a *nullah* that ran a short way from and parallel with the stream. After putting up the stops, Tulshi returned to the beaters to supervise and bring up the beat, and, though he knew his business well, there was a small flaw in his arrangements. He made the mistake of placing W——'s *machan* in the bed of the small dry *nullah* instead of putting it on some rising ground, from which both the *nullah* and the bank of the stream could be commanded.

This *nullah* was the direct route along which the tiger was used to prowl at night to get to the heavier forest beyond, and Tulshi erroneously thought the animal would follow this line when disturbed by the beat. He was very out in his calculations, as the Maharaj was too cunning a tiger to be caught in a trap like this and, as the beat approached, he slunk along the top of this *nullah*, just out of sight of W——. Though Tulshi had provided against such a contingency by placing a stop to turn the animal should it take that route, the stop lost his head as he saw the Maharaj approach and, instead of tapping lightly with his axe against the tree on which he was perched, the man shouted and made too much noise altogether. The animal was startled, and with a bound was in the *nullah* and tearing across it at full speed to get to the other bank. W—— fired hurriedly, and though it was a difficult shot the tiger answered to it with a surly grunt and a bad stumble, and then raced on and disappeared over the opposite bank, followed by a forlorn and hopeless shot from W——'s second barrel. He ran the gauntlet, and, forcing the stops on the other flank, painfully made for and reached the friendly jungles at the back of the *machan*.

He was gone for good: regrets were vain. W—— followed on his blood trail for a short distance, but was

obliged to give up the chase, as he soon saw the animal was not mortally wounded. It is useless to describe the disappointment of all concerned in that beat, nor is it any good to try and express the strong language in which the men blamed each other for letting the tiger through. The Maharaj had gone, and during the remainder of W——'s stay at Arampur he was not heard of again in his old haunts.

III.

Conjecture was rife in and around Arampur for many days after this memorable beat as to the fate of the Maharaj; the general opinion being that the animal had wandered off and died of his wounds. The Maharaj, however, survived, and owed his life as much to luck as to W——'s poor shooting. The bullet with which he was struck had a heavy charge of cordite behind it, and though it would have made short work of him had it caught him in the shoulder or body, it only drilled a clean hole through his massive forearm below the elbow, missing the bone, but cutting through tendons and muscles and very near crippling him at once.

The wounded beast went on, and only when he had covered a great distance did he allow himself a rest, when he lay up beside a small pool of water. He lingered here for a couple of days, undergoing excruciating pain from his wound, and then rage and hunger made him move on again. His wound was now in a fearful way, and though he licked and cleaned it with his rough tongue, maggots formed and drove him nearly mad. He could barely limp along, but yet on he went in search of some quiet spot to lie up in, or die.

The fourth night after being wounded found him approaching his old haunts in the Chandapur jungles. He was weak and crippled, but yet hoped to find a sambar or barasinga taking his mud bath in one of the pools he used to hunt around years ago. He felt his strength was thoroughly sapped through pain and hunger, and knew unless he killed that night he could hold out no longer.

ate his fill. After concealing the corpse under a heavy bush, he had a drink at the pool and then lay up close by, hoping to return and resume his meal whenever it suited him.

It was long after day had broken, that he heard a concourse of men approaching. It was the Chandapur folk, who had gathered on Ramesar's ghastly news being broken and had come with him in a body to investigate. On arrival at the scene, there were many signs from which they were able to piece together the whole details of the tragedy; the pugmarks disclosed the murderer to be a very big and heavy tiger; the impressions showed there was some deformity in the left fore foot, as the toes were greatly turned in. The drag was followed and a gruesome sight awaited them, as Joala's body was come on in the *nullah*, with the greater portion of it already devoured. It was carried back to Belwa and duly interred by the deceased's relatives.

The Maharaj slunk away quietly on hearing the men approach; he had feasted heavily, and already felt his strength returning to him. Joala Gond's death was most opportune, and it saved him when he was on the point of sinking through sheer hunger and loss of strength. This was a regular turn in the tide for him, for matters were not so desperate now, as with his renewed strength, two nights later, he was able to seize a young heifer he found astray in the forest. His wound had begun to heal, though he found he was greatly disabled through it, and could no longer bring off his rapid and stealthy dashes to seize the alert sambar or spotted deer; cattle, he found, were being herded more carefully. There were still pig, however, to give him a meal now and again, and he gradually grew stronger and extended his nocturnal wanderings more and more. During the day-time he was often tempted by the sight of men passing through the forest, but as they were never alone his courage failed him, and he refrained from attacking them.

There was of course a great stir in the villages bordering on the Chandapur jungles on the death of Joala Gond, but, as the few men who possessed guns did not

consider their weapons powerful enough to deal with the Maharaj, he was left alone, and no men would sally out after dusk, or sit up for deer at the drinking pools. Roop Singh was approached by the villagers, but was firm and refused to have anything to do with the animal. No money was worth risking his precious life for, and nothing could induce him to pass a night in a forest which held a man-eater.

Nothing was heard or seen of the tiger for a whole week after Joala's death, beyond his tracks on some of the jungle paths; the impression alone of his turned-in left foot told the men that the man-eater still hung around their forest.

The festival of Janm Asthmi arrived, when it was incumbent on every true Gond of the neighbourhood to repair to a lonely and ruined shrine, three miles from Chandapur in the heart of the heavy forest, where the women folk were to make small offerings of rice and grain and leave some yellow marigolds and a small light burning, after their devotions. Decked out in their best apparel, the Chandapur inhabitants were returning home at dusk along the narrow and overgrown path, when Parbati, a young Gondi woman, dropped behind a few moments to extract a thorn from her bare foot. The people ahead heard only a small cry, and, looking back, saw a large tiger with a human body dragging by its side disappear into the undergrowth bordering the path. Immediately a great shouting and yelling was set up by the frightened crowd, but it was of no avail, as the Maharaj carried off his victim. Night was setting in, so Parbati was left to her fate, to form a gruesome and ghastly meal for the man-eater.

The body, or what remained of it, was recovered in the morning, and whilst the poor defenceless villagers with their usual lethargic temperament did nothing beyond taking greater precautions against being surprised by the tiger in future, the Maharaj, fully realizing what an easy prey man afforded him, became keener than ever to pick up a human victim, wherever he could manage it without danger to himself. He became a regular fiend in cunning, and

extended his range of operations greatly; visiting the forests of even Malapur and Belwa. He haunted the forest roads and paths, and patience procured him many an unwary wood-cutter or wayfarer. He became in course of time a scourge to the countryside, as none felt safe in the jungles or on the roads unless in large parties.

News of his depredations spread around and drifted into the Headquarters of the district, and a large reward was placed by Government on his head. The impression of his deformed foot was observed on the scene of every man-killing incident, and the Maharaj was roundly cursed and abused whenever his name was mentioned in a dozen or so of villages that had yielded him a human victim. The animal was constantly on the move; killing sometimes on consecutive nights at distances ten miles apart; no one was able to locate him, and none knew where next to expect him.

The tract of country he favoured was a long distance from Headquarters, and almost inaccessible for European sportsmen for want of roads. In spite of the reward offered by Government, the native shikaris would have nothing to do with him, as the awe he had inspired in them made them hesitate to penetrate the jungles in quest of the beast, when anyone of them was liable to be carried off, tramping about in search of him. The extent of his cunning was exaggerated greatly, and wonderful and supernatural powers were ascribed to him. There was nothing for it but to put up with this terrible state of affairs; all they could do was to keep away from the jungle as far as possible, and rely on Providence to come to their aid and rid them in some way of their dreaded persecutor.

Traps were set for him, and the carcasses of animals killed by him were poisoned, but yet the Maharaj continued to live and thrive. As his human prey became more vigilant and more difficult to procure, his wanderings were still further extended, and his absences became longer and longer, and often lulled the villagers into hoping he had gone off altogether, or met his death at the hands of some shikari or other a long way from their homes. This feeling

of security was generally destined to be rudely disturbed by news that the man-eater had returned and was at his games again. He now invariably moved on after each of his foul slayings, as he found the corpse was always removed by a crowd of shouting villagers, and he was never given a chance of a second feed.

It was during one of the animal's long absences from the Malapur jungles that Roop Singh, the Sub-Inspector of Police, was induced by Rahim, the local Mohamedan timber contractor who was craving for meat, to take out his gun and try for a spotted deer. "No tracks of the *Shaitan** had been seen for weeks in the jungles, and Allah only knew whether the beast was alive or dead." Rahim would accompany Roop Singh and sit up with him in a high *machan* overlooking the little pool within the fringe of the jungle, where the deer were wont to drink at night. "There was nothing to fear—it would be a cloudless moonlight night, and they would sit high enough to be out of reach of any but a tiger with wings." Roop Singh was cautious, but the remembrance of the delicious curry his wife had made him from the flesh of his last doe chital—shot so very long ago—outweighed any hesitation caused by his fear.

Accordingly, before dusk, these two worthies were safely ensconced in a comfortable *machan*, waiting patiently for whatever meat the gods chose to send their way. The little pool lay glistening invitingly in the silvery moonlight, and yet no stag or doe had tripped down to it to quench its thirst. The night wore on, and the moon was just setting when sharp calls of alarm from a herd of spotted deer startled the two drowsy watchers into wakefulness.

"Get your gun ready Roop Singh—the deer are coming down to the water—but it is very dark I am afraid."

"Never mind—I have a heavy charge of slugs in the old gun," whispered Roop Singh. "Any one of these

* Devil.

slugs is large enough for the biggest stag, if only I can see it moving."

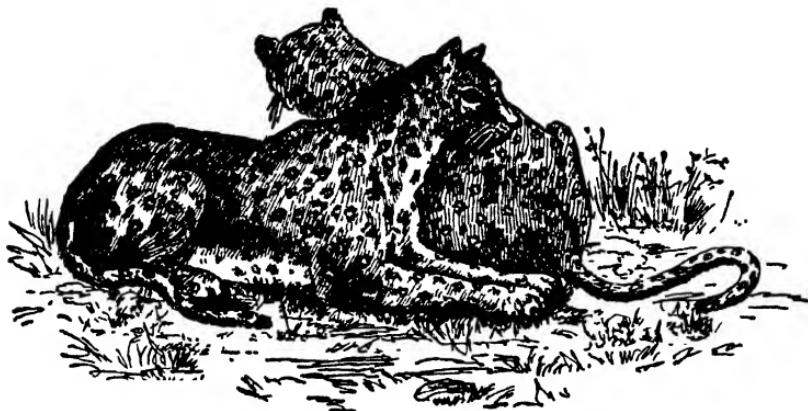
The two men sat quiet and alert, and presently Rahim whispered that what appeared to be a shadow near their tree was slowly approaching the water. His companion saw it too, and lifting his gun and taking careful aim pressed the trigger. The shot was followed by the sound of a rasping and gurgling grunt, and the shadow seemed to pitch forward and then remained still, half in and half out of the water. There was no further movement, and the two men immediately knew that one of the Felidæ species, probably a panther, had fallen to the shot.

After their excitement had abated, they curled up and went off to sleep. Roop Singh was roughly awakened at dawn by his companion, who pointed to the body of a magnificent tiger stretched out lifeless below them.

The reader will have doubtless by now come to the conclusion that it was the Maharaj who had thus come to his end, and as he is right it is only necessary to say that it really was the cunning old beast, who had just returned to the Malapur jungles from one of his long tours, and, dropping down to the tank to quench his thirst as he passed along, received a single slug from Roop Singh's gun behind the ear.

The Sub-Inspector was the hero of the countryside for many a long year after this, and to this day when the simple Gond villagers mention the name of the Maharaj, it is only with a string of curses after it.

It was indeed an ignominious end for such a grand beast, who would have led a clean life but for the hurried and badly placed shot that crippled and drove him, through sheer weakness and hunger, to become the most hated and dreaded of all animals—the man-eater of the Indian jungles.



CHAPTER VI.

THE PANTHER (*Felis Pardus*).

Hindi, *Tendua*, *Gulbagh*, *Baghera*.

Kol, *Karouch*.

Canarese, *Kirba*, *Kurka*.

Amongst the wild carnivores of the Indian jungle, the panther comes next in importance to the tiger, especially as I am writing of the felidæ first. This animal is to be found throughout the Indian peninsula, in Burma, and in Ceylon, accommodating itself to any description of forest and jungle, equally at home in the cool Himalayas as in the hot arid tracts of Central India.

Before proceeding further with any description of these pards, I cannot omit a few remarks on the great controversy, that seems never ending, as to whether the leopard and the panther are one and the same animal. Most sportsmen have given this point up in despair, and either call every pard by the name of panther or differentiate between the particular specimens they come across.

Personally, I consider all are of the same species and, like tigers, can be divided into varieties, based on their size, habits and habitats, speaking and thinking of them for my own convenience as the larger variety and smaller variety. The name, leopard, appears to me a misnomer altogether and should only be applied to the hunting leopard or chita (*Felis Jubata*); but as the term, or rather name has been in use for centuries almost amongst sportsmen, I never trouble to force my opinion on those who speak

of what I call a panther as a leopard. It was singular though to hear the people in Africa, especially the Dutch, speaking of the panther as the tiger, and they had no reason for this when panthers, identically the same in appearance as the Indian animal, are common throughout the country.

As far as I know, no appreciable difference has been noticed in the formation of the skull in typical animals examined by exponents of the theory that the panther is distinct from the leopard. They are found side by side, inhabiting the same kind of forests and localities; their habits and method of killing their prey are the same; any difference of colouration is only imaginary, and not more marked than in the case of tigers; their temperament, especially in downright viciousness, is the same. So that, I think there is some force to back me in the line I am adopting in speaking of all pards, with the exception of *Felis Jubata*, as panthers throughout this chapter, but for the gratification of those who differ from me I shall give a few extracts of the still well read works of some authoritative and observant sportsmen, and shall be surprised to find "the leopard is distinct from the panther" idea is any further satisfactorily settled. Sanderson writes "The distinction between the panther and the leopard is practically small, and lies chiefly in the inferior size of the leopard. The markings, habits, and general appearance (except size) of the two animals are almost identical. But neither can be confounded with the chita, even by the most casual observer. It will be seen that, irrespective of the difference of the physical conformation of the panther and chita, the spots of the panther (and also the leopard) are grouped in rosettes, enclosing a portion of the ground colour; whereas those of the chita are solid, and are separate from each other.

"Between the panther and leopard the distinction is, as above stated, less marked, and is chiefly interesting to zoologists and critical sportsmen. The general observer may be pardoned for confounding the two. All interested in the question in India are aware of the prolonged controversy that has been carried on upon the subject, but

most are now, I think agreed, in accepting Dr. Jerdon's view, based upon the most reliable evidence—namely, that the panther and leopard are near varieties of the same species. Though they differ greatly in size, the former attaining, in exceptional cases, almost to the dimensions of a small tigress, whilst the latter is frequently, when full-grown, under fifty pounds in weight—in fact, not larger than our large bull-dog—there is not more radical difference between the two animals than exists between horses and ponies, or large dogs and little ones. Their habits and haunts are almost identical, such divergences as occur being due mainly to the relative powers of the two animals. Thus, whilst the panther seizes cattle as well as the smaller domestic animals, and large deer, the leopard is content with goats, dogs, and even fowls; and in the forest it preys upon pea-fowl, hares, and such small game. Much of the confusion that has arisen regarding panthers and leopards has undoubtedly been caused by the fact that adult animals are found, varying in size as much as do the dray-horse and the child's pony, or the mastiff and toy-terrier. As there are also various shades of colour amongst them, the question has puzzled many who have not had opportunities of examining numerous specimens of both animals. The following distinctions, compiled chiefly from Dr. Jerdon's "Mammals," will, I trust, assist the inexperienced sportsman to a correct classification of such animals of the two varieties as he may shoot.

"The panther (*Felis Pardus*) varies in size from six to eight feet from nose to tip of tail. Ground colour generally pale fulvous yellow, or rufous fawn, with dark spots grouped in rosettes, except on the spine and towards the extremities, where they are distinct black marks. Fur short and close. The ground colour is lighter in old than in young animals.

"The leopard (*Felis Leopardus*) varies greatly in size, but probably never exceeds six feet in length from nose to tip of tail. Some individuals are little larger than a large tiger-cat. The leopard is stouter in proportion to its size than the panther, and the skull is rounder. The spots are

more crowded, and the fur is longer and looser than in the panther."

The above quotation only goes to confirm my opinion that these animals are of the same species, and that general colouration differs greatly in individuals, as I have shot big specimens, both of the pale fulvous yellow, said by Dr. Jerdon to be peculiar to the panther, and also of the darker hue and longer and looser fur attributed to the leopard only. And I have shot a good few undersized specimens in the Province of Bihar that tally with the description given by the same authority of the larger variety, namely panthers.

Now we find Sterndale in his "Indian Mammalia" writing "Although the term leopard as applied to panthers has the sanction of almost immemorable custom, I do not see why, in writing on the subject, we should perpetuate the misnomer, especially as most naturalists and sportsmen are now inclined to make the proper distinction. I have always avoided the use of the term leopard, except when speaking of the hunting chita, preferring to call all the others, panthers.

"Then again we come on disputed ground. Of panthers how many have we, and how should they be designated? I am not going farther afield than India in this discussion beyond alluding to the fact that the jaguar of Brazil is almost identical with our pard as far as marking goes, but is a stouter, shorter tailed animal, which justifies his being classed as a species; therefore, we must not take superficial colouring as a test, but class the black and common pards together; the former, which some naturalists have endeavoured to make into a separate species (*Felis Melas*), but merely a variety of the latter.....It is not as I said before, that we should go upon peculiarities of marking and colour, although these are sufficiently obvious, but on their osteology and also the question of interbreeding and production. Grant their relative sizes, one so much bigger than the other, and the difference in colour and marking, has it ever been known that out of a litter of several cubs by a female of the larger kind one of the smaller sort has been produced, or vice versa? This is a question that yet

remains for investigation. My old district had both kinds in abundance, and I have had scores of cubs, of both sorts, brought to me—cubs which could be distinguished as to which kind they belonged to, but I never remember any mixture of the two. As regards the difference in appearance of the adults there can be no question. The one is a higher, longer animal, with smooth shiny hair of a light golden fulvous, the spots being clear and well defined, but, as was remarked by Sir Walter Elliot, the strongest difference of character is in the skulls, those of the larger pard being longer and more pointed, with a ridge along the occiput, much developed for the attachment of the muscles, whereas the smaller pard has not only a rougher coat, the spots being more blurred, but it is comparatively a more squat built animal, with a rounder skull without the decided occipital ridge. There is a mass of evidence on the point of distinctness—Sir Walter Elliot, Horsfield, Hodgson, Sir Samuel Baker, Johnson (author of "Field Sports in India"), "Mountaineer," a writer in the Bengal Sporting Review, even Blyth and Jerdon, all speak to the difference, and yet no decided separation has been made. There is in fact too much confusion and too many names. For the larger animal *Felis Pardus* is appropriate, and the *leopardus* of Temminck, Schreber and others is not. I should say *Felis Panthera*, which, being common to Asia and Africa, was probably the panther of the Romans and Greeks. Jerdon gives as a synonym *F. Longicaudata* (Valenciennes) but I find on examination of the skulls of various species that *F. Longicaudata* has a complete bony orbit which places it in Grey's genus *Catolynx*, and it is too small for our panther. We might then say that we have the pard, the panther, and the leopard in India, and then we should be strictly correct. Some sportsmen speak of a smaller panther which Kinloch calls the third (second?) sort of panther, but this differs in no respect from the ordinary one, save in size, and it is well-known that this species varies very much in this respect, I am not singular in the views I now express. Years ago Colonel Sykes, who was a well-known naturalist, said of the pard: "It is a taller, stronger, and

slighter built animal than the next species, which I consider the panther. The skull of the pard in some degree resembles that of the jaguar, which again is nearest the tiger, whereas that of the panther appears to have some affinity to the restricted cats."

As far as can be gathered from the above quotation, Sterndale concedes the point that there are different varieties of panther, but does not consider the name of leopard appropriately applicable to any of them. We find that if the word leopard is permissible it should be applied to the smaller variety of panther; whereas another equally good and observant sportsman, Captain J. Forsyth, thinks just the opposite, and calls the larger variety leopards and the smaller panthers. Rather a muddle, to say the least of it, for the poor sportsman to elect the names by which he will call these animals.

Another great sportsman, Mr. F. C. Hicks, who has probably shot more panthers than any one else during his service as a Forest Officer in India, expresses his views on the subject in "Forty Years Among the Wild Animals of India" and writes thus, alluding to the chita (*Felis Jubata*), "Now a few words regarding the name of this animal. I agree with Sterndale that this is the only beast to whom the name 'Leopard' can properly be applied. The word 'Leopard' literally means the 'Spotted-lion' and was applied by the ancients to one of the larger spotted felines. Now, the only larger spotted feline known to the ancients were *Felis Jubata* and *Felis Panthera*; so that it must have been to one of these two, that they applied the name 'Leopard,' obviously because of some resemblance of one of them to the Lion.

"The Lion is more dog-like, and differs in many ways from the Panther, who is more like a cat in which it resembles the Tiger. The Lion has a flatter skull, a more pronounced mane, a slim tucked-up appearance about the loins, all of which peculiarities are markedly possessed by *Felis Jubata*, who still further resembles a dog in having a high turn of speed and only semi-retractile claws. The Panther has none of these peculiarities, while he can also

be easily overtaken on a horse, whereas the speed of *Felis Jubata* is proverbial, so that it is very evident that it is the latter animal that is meant by the ancients when in their writings they so often refer to 'the speed of the leopard.'

"To avoid being misunderstood on account of the long-established custom of misusing the word 'Leopard,' I have discarded this word altogether, and prefer calling *Felis Jubata* the 'Chita,' which is commonly understood in this sense, by all European sportsmen, though in its native sense the word 'Chita' is as ambiguous and as indiscriminately used as is our English word 'Leopard'; for it corresponds to the Latin adjective *Pardus*, and means merely 'spotted.' From the Hindi verb 'Chintna,' we have 'Chint,' the corresponding English word being 'Chintz,' both of which apply to a certain kind of spotted cloth. When the past participle is used as an adjective or a noun the 'n' is left out; thus we have 'Chita' meaning anything spotted; Chital, meaning the spotted deer; Chita-bora, a certain spotted snake. Thus 'Chita' in Hindi, used as a noun, may mean anything spotted; nor is the Persian word 'Yuz' any the less ambiguous, for it applies equally to *Felis Panthera* as to *Felis Jubata*. But we are not here concerned so much with the native language as with English, and as the word 'Chita' used as an English word is universally understood to apply to *Felis Jubata*, I have used this term when referring to this animal rather than be misunderstood by using its more correct name, Leopard."

I cannot say whether the reader has got any enlightenment on the subject after perusing and studying the above extracts; but on the whole I think it may safely be inferred that the name of leopard, unless applied to the spotted felines with semi-retractile claws, is not popular with the sportsmen, from whose works the extracts have been taken.

I have always split up the species into two varieties, based on size chiefly. The larger panther is not far inferior in size to a mediocre tigress, as he runs up to nearly eight feet in length and has remarkable muscular development—one I bagged in the Doon jungles taped seven

feet seven inches—and far surpasses the tigress in agility, boldness and general viciousness; but with all deference to the opinions of such sportsmen as I have quoted, I cannot say that I have found them invariably of a lighter tint than their smaller brethren. This animal prefers thick and heavy tree jungles to the scrub so much favoured by the lesser panther, and does not trouble so much to live away from or on the outskirts of forests frequented by tigers. I once arrived at a camp in the Central Provinces where, two days previously, a huge panther was found by villagers to have been killed by a tigress, with whom it had evidently tried to dispute the ownership of a "kill."

The tracks of the larger variety are to be seen often in lonely forests, long distances away from human habitations, giving one the impression that he relies as much on game for his prey as on man's domestic animals. A cow or bullock never comes amiss to him if found in the jungles, but as a rule he is not so bold as the lesser panther, and hesitates much more in taking one out of a herd of goats grazing in the forests with an attendant on the *qui vive*. Altogether he is not the stealthy sneaking beast that prowls round villages eyeing every goat and pariah dog to be seen round the village site. He usually makes his lair amongst thick undergrowth, or in ravines overgrown with long grass, and I have never found one inhabiting a cave amongst rocks; whereas the smaller variety never fails to appropriate one, especially if it overlooks or is within easy distance of a village.

Spotted deer stags and even doe sambar are not too large for the bigger panther and often fall a prey to the powerful animal. I remember one day coming across a full-grown sambar doe that had just been killed by a panther. I was wandering about amongst the higher and quiet gorges of the Sewaliks, on the look out for a good sambar stag, and as the tracks around the "kill" were rather indistinct, I was inclined to think it was the handiwork of a tigress, and decided to sit up over it for an hour or two. Getting up on to the branch of a conveniently placed tree in the afternoon, I ordered my one companion, a

retired Gurkha sepoy, to go down and wait for me in a dry river-bed, a quarter of a mile away. My patience was rewarded, for about an hour after the man's departure a magnificent specimen of a panther slunk out to the "kill," and was dropped by a shot in the neck from the .375 Mannlicher I was using at the time. I did not take this animal's measurements, but remember him to be one of the biggest I have ever shot.

Unless a panther is marked down into a small and isolated patch of jungle, the chances are, beating for the animal will be a hopelessly unsuccessful affair. It is generally by mere chance alone that these animals fall to the sportsman's gun, being come across when least expected. The most paying way, however, of bagging them, is by sitting up over a live goat near any hill or jungle in which the beasts are known to be living; the calling of the goat, as soon as it finds itself alone, never fails to draw any panther that may be within hearing distance. On one occasion I bagged two of the smaller variety within half an hour of each other over the same goat and from the same tree, without the goat coming to the smallest harm. One animal had hardly been sent off to the camp when the other turned up. If the sportsman has his eyes about him he should certainly be able to shoot the panther before it rushes on to the goat, as the beast is never in such a hurry as to approach without the greatest of caution, standing every now and again to scan every inch of ground very thoroughly before making his rush. Though beating for panther is full of disappointments, yet I do not go so far as to say that it is always so; a great deal depends on the nature of the jungle, the individual temperament of the animal, and the element of luck. Camped in one of the eastern districts of the Central Provinces, one night I heard a great deal of fighting and caterwauling going on in some heavy forest not far from our tents, and came to the conclusion that two panthers were having a bit of a difference over a "kill" they had in the jungle, and decided to try my luck in a beat the next morning. I got together about thirty men and beat

the jungle on the chance, which was undoubtedly poor, of the animals being near the "kill" in the early morning. As the beaters hove in sight, coming through the jungle, it looked uncommonly like a blank beat, a repetition of many former panther beats, and I was on the point of putting down my gun, when a panther suddenly showed itself, rushing headlong and open-mouthed straight for me. I was just in time to stop it almost at my feet with a bullet from my 12-bore shot gun in the centre of the chest, cutting a groove in the animal's chin. The beast turned out to be an undersized but full-grown female, and evidently had up to the last entertained hopes of being able to sneak back through the beaters. The other party to the overnight's quarrel made good his escape without giving anyone a glimpse of himself.

This beast must have been a male, for a week later, when beating the same patch of jungle for sambar, a fine male panther rushed out, and giving me an awkward shot, got off with a whole skin. This brute was not to escape me, however, as it was fated that we should renew our acquaintance a few days later. I was at the time tying up for a tiger, and this animal came upon and killed the buffalo, and paid for his interference and meddling with his life, as I sat up over the carcass and shot him as he came out to it before dusk set in.

These larger panthers are a great nuisance to the sportsman who is tying up for tiger, as they are capable of killing all bullocks and also fairly large young buffaloes. Baits for tiger are generally tied out in spots where the jungle is suitable for beating, and though such spots are workable for tiger beats, they are hopelessly unfavourable for beating out such sneaking and elusive beasts as panthers. The sportsman has no alternative but to sit up in such spots, should a panther kill his bait, and has to decide for himself whether the bagging of a panther will compensate him for the risk he will run of frightening away the tiger. During one shoot I put in in the Central Provinces, there were a couple of panthers working together who picked up and killed every bait I tied out for

a tiger, and it took me quite ten days to rid myself of these pests, bagging the female over the second buffalo they killed, and wounding and losing the male, on, if I remember rightly, the fourth animal they cost me.

I obtained another good specimen of the larger variety of panther in the foot hills of the Himalayas, some miles below Mussoori, by sitting up over a cow it had killed. I was obliged to drag this "kill" fully a hundred yards down the side of a hill to a spot where there was a small walnut tree, on which I had a village string cot tied up. There was a heavy fog that night, and as it got dark I could barely make out the carcass of the cow lying in front of me. When the fog was at its thickest, and bushes and rocks around me were magnified in size, I heard an animal at the "kill," and fired at a dark shadow I could just make out but, as there was no response to my shot, and I failed to hear any heavy animal rush away, I came to the conclusion that I must have fired at a jackal. Anyway, I thought I would give myself another half hour, and shortly after, as the fog was lifting a bit, in the pale moonlight I suddenly saw the panther standing over the "kill." A bullet from a 12-bore Paradox, followed up quickly by a charge of slugs, dropped the animal, and, on getting off my perch, I was agreeably surprised to find it was a much larger beast than I had expected to come across in those hills. He had a lovely coat, and was as dark in colour as any of the smaller variety of panther I have ever shot.

Though a heavy animal, the panther finds no difficulty in climbing trees, and very often does so, and lies along a branch overhanging some well frequented game track, to pounce on any unwary deer or other animal that has the misfortune to pass underneath. I have, on quite half a dozen occasions, had a panther jump off a tree as I have unconsciously gone along a jungle path in its direction.

The terrible ferocity and viciousness of these animals, when wounded, have not been exaggerated by sportsmen who have had much experience of them. The rage of a wounded panther is, however, always tempered with

caution, and is different to that of a wounded tiger, in that the latter animal charges home to kill, regardless of consequences whilst the panther charges with the intention of doing as much harm with his teeth and claws in as short a time as possible, consistent with his line of retreat being assured. I have also come across specimens that have shown the utmost cowardice and endeavoured to the very end to get away without putting up a fight, even though followed into cover, in which they could have given a great deal of trouble, had they wished.

As their claws and teeth are generally badly impregnated with putrid and decomposed matter, due to their habit of feeding on their "kills" to the very last ounce of flesh, it behoves all sportsmen to be especially careful of the smallest of wounds inflicted by these animals, as germs which cause blood-poisoning and other troubles are likely to be introduced into the wounds. The attack is always from very close quarters, and is made with such lightning-like speed, that the sportsman is very liable to fail to stop him getting home; and also as he forms rather a small mark when coming through the air in his charge, it is a good plan to receive him with a charge of slugs from each barrel. Slugs at close quarters, when well placed in the head or behind the shoulder, will drop a panther like a stone.

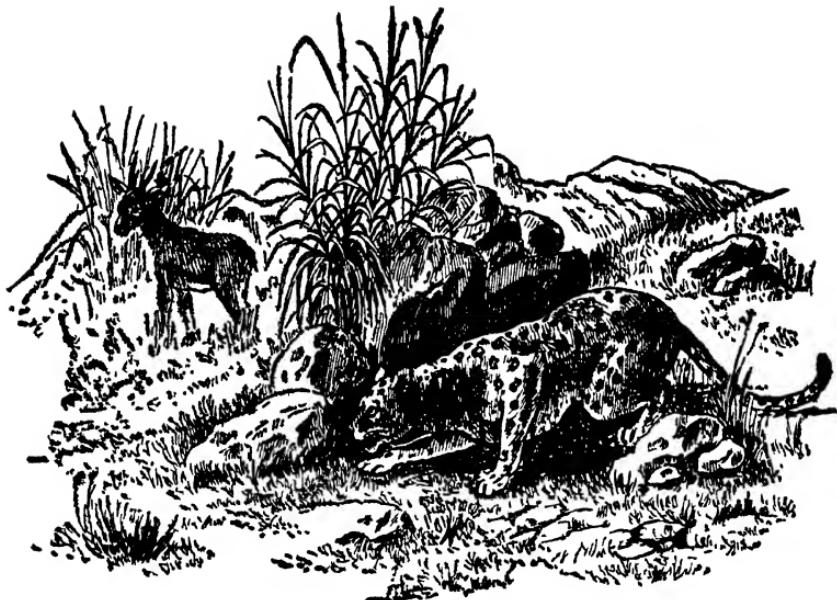
Though I have not had it occur to me, panthers have been known to spring or climb on to *machans* to pull down sportsmen who have wounded them. M—— of the Indian Police, had a nasty experience years ago with one he wounded from a *machan*; the animal, climbing up the tree after him, mauled him badly about the legs, in its attempts to pull him down. When relating the incident, M—— said, what struck him most at the time was the poisonous breath of the animal, and stated that he could well understand how the smallest scratch or bite from such a beast, unless attended to immediately, would lead to blood-poisoning. I am, however, glad to say he got over it all right.

I had one of these brutes charge my tree on one occasion, but as he had a broken shoulder, all he could do

was to rear up against the trunk with threatening growls, when, finding he was unable to climb, he floundered off into cover before I could get in a second shot in the bad light.

In my experience, man-eating panthers are mostly of the larger variety that I am at present writing about, though I find it rather difficult to account for this being the case. I can only think it is because of their frequenting jungles at a distance from human habitations and preying so much on game, that, when old age with its consequent loss of activity and energy comes on them, and not having been so frequently awed by villagers protecting their domestic animals, they take to man-killing more boldly and persistently than the smaller breed of panthers. Besides the above reasons, the larger panther is more conscious of his greater strength, and has more confidence in himself, due, as I said before, to his having given way less frequently before man.

As I shall be giving examples in a later chapter of some man-eaters I have come across, I shall not touch on them further here, and conclude by describing the larger panther as a decidedly difficult beast to bring to bag. Any shoot exclusively for this animal is hardly worth the time and money spent on it, whilst the sportsman is sure to have greater success with the smaller variety, whose boldness and closer touch with man and his habitations is more likely to bring him into contact with the sportsman's bullet.



CHAPTER VII.

THE PANTHER (*continued*).

THE GOAT AND DOG-LIFTER.

There is not much doubt that the smaller variety of panther forms quite seventy-five per cent. of the whole species, and though there may be, as some naturalists assert, a small difference in the formation of the skulls of the two varieties, the smaller is only a miniature model of the larger, resembling the latter in every respect as regards markings and general temperament, and differing only in regard to size and the nature of jungle inhabited.

I am afraid I must modify the assertion made by many writers, that the smaller panthers are always of a darker shade than their bigger and more powerful brothers, by substituting the word "generally" for "always," as I have shot a few among the bare rocky hills of Bihar that were miserably undersized brutes with a pale yellow background for their rosettes and spots, and I am inclined to think that both the colour and size of these animals are peculiar to different tracts throughout the country; just as black buck and stags are acknowledged to carry better horns and antlers in Northern than in Southern India.

The smaller panther is not at all impatient of the proximity of man, and, relying on his small size to hide and sneak out of view when necessary, prowls about boldly at night through the cultivation around villages, and does not hesitate to even sneak in and out of the streets in search of dogs and goats. The sly cunning of which these animals are capable makes it possible for them to snatch dogs out of the very houses of the villages, and to squirm their way into goat and sheep folds to drag out their victims. Villages situated in the midst of panther-haunted jungles are denuded of all their canine inhabitants, for no dog ever lives long in such surroundings.

During my rambles in jungle and forest, in spite of all the care I have given my dogs, I am sure I have had not less than half a dozen carried off by these inveterate dog-lifters. The poor goat herd has a rotten time of it, as his flock is constantly being thinned by these animals, either while out grazing within the fringe of the jungle, or when shut up for the night in their far from impregnable pens, which, as a rule, are located in the suburbs of the villages. These animals are not above helping themselves to even poultry if they can get at them.

Though their chief diet consists of such small fry as mentioned above, it is marvellous to see how they are always ready to kill, and succeed in doing so, big heifers and undersized bullocks, and should two be working together, there is nothing in the way of baits that you may tie for a tiger, that they will not kill.

Both varieties kill their prey by quite a different method to that of the tiger; all small animals are pounced on and simply strangled to death by being gripped by the throat, whilst larger ones, such as bullocks, are seized by the face and muzzle and pulled to earth, when they are worried to death by the panther biting into the throat. There is no attempt at dislocating the neck, as is so often noticed with tiger kills. Both varieties of panther start on the chest, stomach or shoulders of their "kills," unlike the tiger which always starts on the hindquarters.

These animals are often known to carry the remains of their "kills" and deposit them on the branches or in the fork of a tree, to keep them out of the reach of prowling hyænas, jackals, and vultures; and they will visit these "kills" for many days, to gnaw at the bones long after they have finished all the flesh on them.

Whilst shooting in Mysore, the Patel (Head-man of a village), told me that a small panther was in the habit of visiting and gnawing at a large heap of bones of dead cattle, which had been collected about a hundred yards away from the village huts, and though I was rather sceptical regarding the truth of this information, I thought it worth testing, and managed to shoot a small panther about nine o'clock that night as she came out for her nightly gnaw at the bones.

The kind of jungles favoured by these smaller panthers is more of the nature of scrub than tree jungle, and any hill with big rocks and caves, in tracts, where these animals abound, will always prove a sure find. Bundelkhund and Central India in general abound in this small variety of panther, as also certain stretches of Mysore, and the less heavily wooded parts of the Central Provinces. They are not partial to heavy forests, and from my own observations, those which hold tiger are especially distasteful to them, for if found there at all, it will only be on the outskirts of such jungles.

I have never found them meddle with a tiger's "kill," as they are far less courageous in this respect than the hyæna. On one occasion, when sitting up over a tiger "kill" in the Mysore jungles, a small panther put in an appearance. He stood for awhile and eyed the "kill" longingly, and then slowly walked away, only to return in an hour's time for another inspection, and even then he could not pluck up sufficient courage to start feeding, though he sat down for over fifteen minutes within a few yards of the "kill"; eventually he rushed off into the bushes as I raised my gun to fire at him. This is very different behaviour to that which would have been displayed, had the visitor been a hyæna; in which case there would



The Lanzle Pool

have been at the most a little preliminary scouting and circling around, when the carcass would have been set upon in earnest.

Writing about hyaenas and panthers, I think a description of a little moonlight scene, that I once witnessed, will be interesting to most sportsmen, and will go to show the want of pluck sometimes displayed by panthers. To describe this incident I shall quote from another work of mine* "Man-eaters and Other Denizens of the Indian Jungle," in which I have written:—"An old Kol turned up at the camp and asked me if I would care to sit up over the carcass of a wild pig that had been killed early that morning in a ravine close to the village by a panther. The old fellow said he would go and bring away the 'kill' if I did not wish to sit over it. There was nothing particular doing that night, so I decided to have a shot at 'Spots' if he should turn up. At dusk I took up my position over the 'kill' in a small *machan* Chotey had tied up for me. About an hour after sunset a very big hyæna put in an appearance, and after trotting all round the 'kill,' started on it. I watched him for over half an hour in the bright moonlight tearing off and swallowing big chunks of meat and bone. After a time he began to look round at some bushes that were in shadow, and every now and again he would stop in his eating and give a peculiar falsetto growl in that direction. The moonlight shortly after reached these bushes, and I was able to make out a large panther, stretched out in a sitting position, looking on at the hyæna calmly demolishing his 'kill.' I had taken the precaution to tie down the 'kill' to a strong peg in the ground, and the hyæna, not being able to drag it away, bit off a fore leg and was carrying it off, when 'Spots,' thinking his time had come for a feed, got up and walked towards the carcass. He was very disappointed however, as the wretched hyæna came trotting back, and with his falsetto voice seemed to frighten 'Spots,' who bounded out of his way. It was most interesting, watching this little

* Messrs. Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta.

jungle quarrel in the clear moonlight, and it was only after the panther had resigned himself to being done out of his own 'kill' by the hideous looking varper, that I lifted my gun and bowled him over.

"The hyæna was not more than four yards from the panther at the time, and for a moment took no notice of my shot. What frightened him, was the sight of poor 'Spots' rolling about in his death agonies. On seeing this he trotted off, though slowly, and returned barely five minutes later, but now kept at a respectable distance. As he would not come closer, I had a shot at and wounded him, but I expect not badly, as he got away and I was not able to find him the next morning. I gave an account of the strange cowardice of the panther to Chotey and other villagers, and was surprised to hear from them, that they knew all along, that where a panther and a hyæna met, the latter was always top-dog."

I am sure the perusal of the above incident will make many a sportsman change his ideas of the relationship between a panther and a hyæna on meeting. Personally, I had an idea, up to the time I witnessed this little jungle scene, that a hyæna would never have the temerity to dispute a "kill" with a panther, but I now find it quite easy to understand how it is that hyænas are quite at home in jungles infested by panthers, though the biggest of dogs, found alone, is no match for a panther; and after all a hyæna, not being far removed from the dog species, one would think would naturally fall a prey to these voracious animals.

In the hill stations of the Himalayas dogs are repeatedly carried off by panthers from the verandahs of the houses, and it is a common practice with the hillmen, who live in the interior, to have spiked collars round the necks of the dogs they in any way value. Whilst out shooting on one occasion, I remember coming on the hut of a lonely shepherd and being greeted by a large and savage Bhootia mastiff, fortunately securely chained to the door. Though the animal was protected by a collar studded with sharp two-inch nails, on my return journey, a fortnight later, I was

told by the owner that it had been killed and eaten by a panther, a few days before.

Both varieties of panther are known to have as many as four cubs in a litter, though personally I have not come across more than two. If taken young they are easily tamed up to a certain stage, and make interesting and amusing pets, but as regards showing any affection towards their masters, I am afraid they are incapable of it. They will spit and snarl viciously if handled whilst eating. One I had, whilst only the size of a cat, never failed to stalk and pounce on any unlucky fowl that happened to be feeding in the compound, and no amount of thrashing would make him relinquish the bird. He became a thorough fiend once he had got his teeth into raw flesh and tasted blood. He was full of mischief and enjoyed some rough play with the dogs, but many a time I saved him from being killed, as the dogs turned on him when he made too free a use of his sharp claws. A tame monkey and young Spots were great friends, and used to chase each other about amongst the branches of the trees. I was obliged to chain him up when he became the size of a large spaniel, as he began to show signs of viciousness and temper, and later I was glad to be rid of him by giving him to a friend. A couple of months after, the poor beast had to be shot, as he mauled an Indian boy, who teased him whilst chained up in his master's verandah.

When camped out in the jungles, the sportsman should note carefully the different calls of animals that denote the presence of a panther on the prowl. Spotted deer, especially, become very noisy and give out short sharp calls of alarm on seeing a panther about, and the hoarse bark of the ribbed face deer and the barking cough of the monkey soon tell the experienced hand the part of the jungle Spots is in at the moment. The surest indication, however, is given by the wandering jackal, and his call of "Pheanw-Pheanw" is a warning I have never yet found to be given without reason. On the outskirts of the jungle, in the quiet still night, it is a weird and unearthly howl, but yet it is a very welcome sound to the patient watcher over a panther "kill," as it tells

him infallibly that the long expected visitor is on his way to the feast that awaits him.

In my experience I have found a charge of S. S. G. (12 pellets to the cartridge) from a 12-gauge smooth-bore very effective against panther at close quarters, as one or more of these pellets is sure to find a vital spot. A bullet will do its work very thoroughly if it gets the animal anywhere in the fore-quarters, but will fail to stop the beast if at all far back. A panther will get away temporarily with most ghastly and frightful wounds if hit in the least bit far back, and, though almost disabled, will put up a good fight in thick cover. A man has very little chance in most jungles of spotting a wounded panther before he is seen himself by the animal, and then of course everything depends on the temperament of the particular beast he is after. The chances are, the wounded brute will charge home rather than make off, and it is a peculiar trait in the animal that he will do his best to maul and damage as many people as he can, rather than stick to the first man he can get hold of. I once turned up at a village in the south of the Allahabad district, where, the day before, no less than five men had been badly mauled by a panther which they tried to beat out of a sugar-cane patch in which he had lain up for the day. These five men had all been mauled within the space of two minutes, and needless to say the animal was left in undisputed possession of his shelter for the rest of that day, and safely quitted it at nightfall.

To return to the subject of using slugs for panther—During a beat for one in the Central Provinces, the animal lay very low, and not till the beaters were practically on it, did she show up, and then came out with a terrific rush, and was almost past me before I could take a snap shot at her. She dropped to the shot like a stone, and going up to examine her, I found only one slug out of the whole charge had hit her, but fortunately that had got her in the ear and penetrated to the brain.

I have, in more than one jungle, been told by native shikaris that a panther and a tigress have been known to interbreed, but I cannot place any credence in the statement;

no hybrid specimen, as far as I know, has ever been shot or seen by sportsmen.

The lesser pard is often trapped in the Mysore jungles, and a good few villages boast of having large cages with strong iron bars which they use for the purpose. The *modus operandi* consists of enticing the panther to enter one of the two compartments into which the cage is divided by baiting the other with a pariah dog or goat; a cleverly set trap-door falls and shuts the animal in as soon as he has entered. A few pages back, I have described how I was asked to shoot one of these trapped animals, and how astonished and hurt the owner of the trap was to find I denied myself the luxury of shooting the poor beast.

The black panther is now recognised to be only a freak of nature, as instances have been recorded of black cubs being found in the same litter with ordinary fulvous ones. There are undoubtedly tracts and localities where cases of melanism are more common than in others. In the Malay Peninsula they must be commoner than usual, as a taxidermist informed me that he had been sent many skins from there for curing.

THE MAN-EATER.

The man-eater amongst panthers is fortunately a *rara avis*, otherwise life in jungle tracts would be intolerable, and vast cultivated areas would be totally deserted. A single specimen has been known to make the inhabitants of populous and thriving villages in the vicinity of the jungle he inhabits desert *en masse* and flee to safer tracts. He creates a positive reign of terror; no one feels safe once dusk has set in, and a crushing and haunting fear takes possession of all. Doors are barred, and, where, as is often the case, the walls of the huts are only of grass, the inmates sit up all night with lighted fires and every sense on the alert to catch the smallest sound, denoting the stealthy prow of the dreaded marauder. The hours of darkness are a horror to these unfortunates, as it is then that the cunning brute is at work, and on the look out for a sleeping and unguarded victim, snatching a man, woman or child from

the courtyard of a hut, or even noiselessly making his way into the hut itself to drag out his human prey through a hole he has cunningly made in the grass wall.

Fortunately for these jungle folk, the animal seldom attacks by day, and the people are fairly safe in the jungles, so long as they enter it in small parties. The man-eating tiger takes his toll in the jungle, day or night, and will pick off a man out of a party, and get away with him in spite of attempts at rescue, but the panther will wait for nightfall before setting to work, and is then to be more feared than the tiger, for he seeks his prey in the cultivation and inhabited areas of the village itself.

During my various shoots in the country, I have more than once camped at spots, where a man-eater of this description has been a curse to the neighbourhood, and I am glad to say, have sometimes been able to rid the locality of the dreadful scourge, under which it had been suffering. The cunning and cowardice of these animals make it a very difficult business to bring them to book. Like his *confrère* —the man-eating tiger—he is always on the move, placing vast distances between the scenes of his different depredations. In spite of the rewards placed on his head by Government, he continues for months, and often for years, to elude all attempts to bring him to bag.

Why the animal takes to man-eating, it is difficult to say, as the game in the forests and the domestic animals of man should suffice for such a cunning, bold and admirable a stalker as the panther. There are many theories, but only theories after all, propounded by writers as to what causes a panther to take to man-eating. These theories fit in and are very probable in the case of the tiger, but as a whole I am inclined to ascribe this predilection for human flesh to sheer viciousness in the case of the pard. All animals are inclined to take advantage of and follow up any signs of fear depicted by man, and I think it very possible (theory again) that a panther is sometime or other tempted to attack a fleeing boy, who has, when tending his cattle in the jungles, come on him suddenly, and from then onwards, becoming

conscious of his power, takes to man-killing and man-eating.

Where the jungles are well stocked with chital, small deer and pig, man-eaters, either tigers or panthers, will rarely be found, and as far as my own experience goes, the progeny of man-eating panthers are not so prone to follow in their parent's footsteps as the young of the man-eating tiger. The smaller animal grows up in greater awe of man, and is less inclined to question his powers than the tiger. As I have said before, the panther's attack is to be feared most by night, for he prefers pouncing on a sleeping and totally unprepared victim; after strangling it with a grip of the throat, or disabling it by a crunch of the skull, he will drag it away with inconceivable stealth and cunning. Bundelkhund, tracts along the slopes of the Kymore range, and a few of the Northern districts of the Central Provinces seem to harbour more man-eating panthers than other parts of India, whilst the foot hills of the Himalayas also have a few to their credit.

Sterndale in his "Mammalia of India" depicts very graphically the unpleasant state of affairs brought about in a certain stretch of country in the Seoni district of the Central Provinces by the presence of a man-eating panther in its jungles, and after a perusal of this, the reader will fully realize the difficulties experienced in bringing one of these demons to book.

He writes, "on the morning of the second day, after leaving Amodagurh, the two sportsmen neared Sulema, a little village not far from Kahani, out of which it was reported the panther had taken no less than forty people within three years. There was not a house that had not mourned the loss of father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or wife or child from within this little hamlet. Piteous indeed were the tales told as our friends halted to gather news, and the scars of the few who were fortunate enough to escape with life after a struggle with the enemy, were looked at with interest; but the most touching of all were the stories artlessly told by a couple of children, one of whom witnessed the death of a sister,

and the other of a brother, both carried off in broad daylight, for the fell destroyer went boldly to work, knowing that they were but weak opponents. I was out several times after this diabolical creature, but without success; as I sat out night after night I could hear the villagers calling from house to house hourly, 'Jágté ho, bhiya? jágté ho?' ('Are you awake, brothers? Are you awake?') All day long I scoured the country with my elephant, all night long I watched and waited. My camp was guarded by great fires, my servants and followers were made to sleep inside tents, while sentries with muskets and bayonets were placed at the doors; but all to no purpose. The heated imagination of one sentry saw him glowering at him across the blazing fire. A frantic camp-follower spoilt my breakfast next morning ere I had taken a second mouthful, by declaring he saw him in an adjoining field. Then would come in a tale of a victim five miles off during the night, and then another, and sometimes a third. I have alluded before to his cowardice; in many cases a single boy or man would frighten him from his prey. On one occasion, in my rounds after him, I came upon a poor woman crying bitterly in a field; beside her lay the dead body of her husband. He had been seized by the throat and dragged across the fire made at the entrance of their little wigwam in which they had spent the night, watching their crops. The woman caught hold of her husband's legs and, exerting her strength against the man-eater's, shrieked aloud. He dropped the body and fled, making no attempt to molest her or her little child of about four years of age. This man was the third he had attacked that night. He was at last killed, by accident, by a native shikari who, in the dusk, took him for a pig or some such animal, and made a lucky shot; but the tale of his victims had swelled to over two hundred during the three years of his reign of terror."

I give in "Man-eaters and Other Denizens of the Indian Jungle" a full account of the trouble and difficulty I experienced in shooting one of these man-eating panthers, and how for weeks he eluded all attempts at bagging him.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE HUNTING LEOPARD (*Felis Jubata*).

Hindi, *Chita*.

Canarese, *Kirba*.

This is the animal to whom the name of leopard in every respect may be rightly applied; he is commonly known and spoken of as the Chita by sportsmen and native shikaris in the few localities in which he is found, and, being more closely allied to the panther than any other of the remaining larger wild carnivora, I give him next in precedence.

I must confess my acquaintance with the animal is very limited, and consists of the one occasion on which I came across a couple of them, many years back, in the Chindwara district of the Central Provinces, and in which I was only able to bag the female. It was altogether a very tame affair, as I shot her one evening as she sat along with her mate in an open clearing in some scrub jungle.

I also came across a very fine specimen on another occasion busily engaged in hunting down some Grant's Gazelle on the Athi Plains of British East Africa, but did not succeed in bagging him, as due to the open nature of the country, my shots had to be taken at too long a range. The poor beast got away, badly hit, into some *dongas*,* and

* Ravines or valleys.

I could not revisit the spot next morning to look him up. I was very sorry to lose him, as I should have liked to see what difference there was between him and the Indian variety. He certainly appeared to me to be a taller and much heavier animal, and also of a lighter tint, as, for a moment or two when I first saw him I mistook him for a lioness.

The points in which the Chita differs from the panther are mainly as follows:—he is a slimmer and lighter built animal; his coat is rougher, especially along the underside, where it is almost shaggy; the black spots on his coat are not in the form of rosettes, but are solid, with none of the tawny background showing through; he has a very distinct and pronounced black line running down each side of his face from the corners of the eyes; his skull is rounder; and above all, the animal has only semi-retractile claws.

The Chita is in great request and valued highly by most Rajas and wealthy Indians, being trained to hunt down antelope and gazelle for their owners. For a short distance he has a marvellous turn of speed, and is the only animal that can pull down a buck in the open plain. Accounts of their training and mode of hunting have been so often given by writers, that I shall not touch on the subject here. Unlike the panther, this animal is very easily tamed, and even when caught full-grown, it is said, the Chita can be tamed and trained for hunting purposes in six months. I was told by the owner of one of these animals, that, when taken young, the Chita does not turn out so satisfactory for hunting as when captured after he had done some hunting in his wild state.

As far as my small experience of the animal goes, it seems to prefer much lighter jungles than would suit a panther, and is especially partial to scrub with ravines and broken ground.

Mr. F. C. Hicks, author of "Forty Years among the Wild Animals of India," had good sport with Chitas in the Chindwara and Seonee districts, and occasionally hunted them with a pack of dogs; the Chitas never putting up a fight, but simply taking refuge up trees when hard pressed

by their pursuers. I have never heard of a case, of the animal attacking human beings. In Africa also, it was said to be of a very mild disposition, and the natives there had no fear of him whilst they gave the panther a very bad reputation.

The Chita is not so widely distributed throughout the country as the panther, being chiefly found in the north of the Bombay Presidency, Scinde and Rajputana, and some of the northern districts of the Central Provinces, and also, I believe in the Punjab. In Mysore I failed to hear of him, in spite of close inquiries.



CHAPTER IX.

THE BEAR (*Ursus*).

Hindi, *Bhalu, Reech.*

Kashmiri, *Harpat.*

Canarese, *Karadi.*

There are many other specimens of the felidæ family that roam the Indian jungles, such as the Lynx (*Felis Caracal*) and two or three varieties of tiger cat, but as none of these can come under the category of large carnivora, I omit any reference to them in this work and go on to the Ursidæ, who, though not all of them are carnivorous, deserve some mention.

The two varieties, most commonly met with in India proper, are the Himalayan Bear (*Ursus Torquatus*) and the Sloth Bear (*Melursus Ursinus*). Besides these, there is the Brown Bear (*Ursus Isabellinus*), which is found throughout the length of the Himalayan Range near the snow line. This animal is most abundant towards the Kashmir end of the Range, and has been known to kill cattle and sheep, and feed on their flesh, though as a rule his diet is restricted to grasses, roots, insects and grubs. When driven lower down by heavy falls of snow, they raid the villagers' crops and vegetables. During the winter months these bears retreat to caves and hollow trees to

hibernate, and only issue forth as the spring sets in, generally about March or April. They are timid animals and rarely put up a fight when molested.

The Himalayan black bear inhabits the range of mountains from which it takes its name, and is very often met with on the same ground as the brown bear, but they do not approach the snow line, and may be found at any elevation from 12,000 feet downwards; I have even come across them on the Sewaliks, the range of hills that forms the southern boundary of the Doon.

These animals are, more often than not, carnivorous, and will readily kill and eat any animals they may come across, and which for any reason cannot get away. In certain tracts of Kashmir, confirmed cattle and sheep killers are to be found and are not uncommon, whilst in Garhwal, where the custom prevails of killing and throwing away all male buffalo calves, I have often seen these black bear busy at the carcasses, and I once came on a case where two of these bears had driven a panther off his "kill" and appropriated it themselves.

The ferocity of this bear cannot be doubted, as there are hundreds of mutilated faces amongst the hill men, some presenting a ghastly sight with nose and lips torn away, that bear testimony to the savage disposition of *Ursus Torquatus*. The animal lies up for the day in thickly wooded ravines or slopes of the hill sides, where men and women, going to cut grass for their cattle, sometime or other fall foul of him. His attack is always directed towards the face of the human being who has roused his ire, and he is capable of inflicting the most terrible wounds with his long sharp claws.

The animal has a curious habit of bending in branches and so building himself a regular nest on the tops of the oak trees, and lies up in these, basking in the sunlight during the early spring. They are expert climbers, and rob the apricot trees around the villages at night, and also commit immense damage in fields of Indian corn and plots of vegetables. They are more feared and respected by the hill men than even the tiger in his jungles.

The Himalayan bears—both black and brown—have splendid coats of fur, differing greatly from the long coarse hair that clothes the Sloth bear; their faces are more pointed and dog-like in appearance, and they have not the white muzzle and prehensile lips of *Melursus*.

All bears are short-sighted, but make up for this with a marvellously acute sense of scent, so that, when after these animals, the sportsman should never fail to reckon with the direction in which the wind is blowing, as the smallest taint in the air, especially when dealing with the brown bear, will spoil the most carefully executed stalk. The best way of bagging these animals is to be on the ground just at dawn, and cut them off, when returning after their night's wanderings to any pet ravine or cave. If the weather is cloudy a shot may be obtained in the late afternoon, when the bears come out to feed.

Beating is also very successful, and I have bagged a good few by this method. The villagers, on being offered a reward, will watch the hill sides carefully in the early mornings and mark down any bears they may see returning. Beaters are quickly collected, and the valley or hill is beaten down towards the sportsman, who takes up a position at the bottom. I have heard of the black bear being shot at night over the carcass of an animal it had killed, but personally I have never sat up at night for a hill bear.

Rambling amongst the Himalayas of Garhwal, at an elevation of 10,000 feet, I once came on a cave that showed unmistakable signs of being tenanted by a black she-bear and her cubs. I decided to sit near its entrance during the afternoon, in hopes that its occupants might take it into their heads to come out for a little fresh air in the evening. Whilst watching the cave two cubs toddled out now and again, but the old mother bear would not show up, and, disapproving of her naughty cubs' little excursions, would call them back into the cave with angry growls and snorts. Though I waited till it was pitch dark, somehow the old lady was suspicious and refused to leave her shelter. Early, the next morning saw me again making for the cave, and as it was not yet light and there was a nasty biting

wind, I had on a thick overcoat as I crawled cautiously down the hill side towards the cave, feeling pretty sure I was in time to catch the trio before they returned from their night's outing. I was within fifty yards of the entrance, when there was a loud and angry "wuh, wuh," and in the poor light I saw the animals disappear into the cave. I had to move on the next day, and so did not get another chance of renewing my acquaintance with the cunning and wide awake family.

I had a stroke of luck shortly after, when, beating for gooral (the small Himalayan Capricorn) one morning, a black bear was put up. He came down the hill at a tremendous pace, and was past me at a distance of five yards before I could get in a shot. For a moment or two I thought I must have missed, as the only effect of the shot was to hurry Ursus on a bit faster, but he hardly went ten yards before he suddenly collapsed. On cutting him open, I found my bullet had raked him through the entire length of the body and was embedded in the sinews and muscles of the neck.

Another bear cut a ludicrous figure as I brought him rolling down a hill with a very long shot. His rapid descent was brought up suddenly by his falling into a stream that ran along the bottom, and to my astonishment he picked himself up, and went off, followed by the remaining contents of my magazine rifle, all four shots missing him. Though he was handicapped by a broken hind leg, I failed to come up with him, as, in spite of his wound, I was no match for him in hill climbing.

When shooting some years ago in the Sewaliks, a shikari who was with me, was chased by a Himalayan bear. We were out on the higher ridges at the time after sambar, and had temporarily separated, when I heard some frightful cries for help, and saw the man making for me as hard as his legs could carry him, with a bear close at his heels. He had a narrow escape, but luckily I was able to turn the brute with a shot from my rifle, and he disappeared down a thickly wooded ravine. This variety of bear is far from common in the Sewaliks, but they are occasionally met with

during the winter months when the heavy snow-fall on the Himalayas drives them down to the lower valleys, and some of them cross over into the Sewaliks.

Though I have had some good sport with the hill bear, it cannot compare with the fun and entertainment I have had out of the Sloth bear. The fun has, however, not always been with me, as I was once knocked off my feet by a she-bear, and got clawed rather badly, and had my rifle hopelessly damaged.

The Sloth bear is an uncommonly pugnacious beast, and like his congenor of the Himalayas, will often charge without provocation, and make a terrible mess of any man he happens to get into his clutches. As a rule he will move off if given timely notice of a human being's approach, but if surprised at close quarters he seldom fails to charge home. I quite disagree with those writers, who say he is a silly and stupid animal and one that can be shot without any chance of retaliation on his part.

In my opinion he is quite a character in himself, and though there is often a deal of entertainment to be had out of watching his absurdly business-like ways, yet, on the whole he is to be taken seriously, as he is the most nasty tempered beast to be met with in the jungles. It is extraordinary how easy it is to miss a bear; his long shaggy coat giving one a false idea of his size. He is a peculiar beast in many ways; always ready to resent any surprise being sprung on him, and if wounded will turn savagely on his companion, should he have one, or will bite viciously at any handy tree or stump, giving vent the whole time to unearthly cries and growls. More than once when I have come upon two or three of these animals together and wounded one of them, I have been greatly amused to see how they all came together immediately after the shot, and standing on their hind legs, indulged in a regular free fight amongst themselves.

We hear and read of the bear's hug, but I am afraid the term is a myth, as their general mode of attack is a rapid shuffling rush accompanied with disconcerting grunts and growls. This rush is enough to knock a man's feet

from under him, and then, if the animal is not too anxious to get away, he sets about completing his job by savagely biting into his enemy till he thinks life is extinct. He, however, especially when surprised at close quarters, sometimes rises on his hind legs when he gets within reach, and then uses his long claws as well as his teeth, his object being to get at the face of the man he is attacking.

A friend of mine was once unfortunate enough to be at the mercy of one of these brutes which he had wounded. After knocking him down the animal stood over his body and mauled him viciously on the legs and back before leaving him stretched out unconscious. It was months before the poor fellow recovered from his wounds, and was not fit till he had taken a trip Home.

The Sloth bear is found throughout India, from the foot of the Himalayas to the extreme south of the Peninsula in country suitable to him. He is very partial to low, rocky and wooded hills, and as a rule lives in caves, from which it is not a difficult matter to eject him by the aid of crackers and stones; but as these rocky hills are honey-combed with caves and fissures, it is no easy matter to find the one he is occupying. Many a bear pays the penalty of his laziness with his life by being beaten out in drives, having failed to retreat to his cave, and lain out in the shade of some bush or overhanging rock, tempted by the cool breezes of the early morning. Beating is the method greatly in favour for bagging these animals, but sitting up for them at night near wild fruit trees in the jungles, is just as paying, and this method is chiefly resorted to in tracts where beating is impossible, or where it cannot turn them out of their caves.

The fruit of the Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) and the Mhowa (*Bassia latifolia*) are favourites with the Sloth bear, and he will travel very long distances at night to any of these trees that happen to be in fruit, and, climbing into the topmost branches, shake down as much of the fruit as he can. The fruit of the wild plum, that grows very profusely in scrub jungle, is also greatly relished by this animal, and the sportsman who has once come on their tracks around

patches of this plum in fruit will find it quite worth his while to stroll round on a moonlight night. The chances are, he will come across Ursus very busy filling his capacious maw, and will be easily able to stalk and get a shot at him. In Bihar this animal resorts at night to the groves of date palms from which the villagers extract their "toddy," an intoxicating drink consisting of the fermented sap extracted from date and palm trees. He climbs these trees and turns the contents of the little earthen vessels, suspended at the top of the trees for the collection of the exuding sap, into his mouth. This "toddy," if at all fermented, has an intoxicating effect, and the native shikaris say a bear is sometimes seen in the early morning returning to his retreat with the rolling gait, generally attributed to those who have had a longer draught than was quite proper at the flowing cup.

The Sloth bear is purely vegetarian and insectivorous in his diet, and has never been known to eat flesh. During the greater part of the year, some wild fruit or berry is sure to be found in the jungles, and when these fail there are always white ants to be had. The animal is an expert in discovering and digging up the nests of these termites; sucking them out with long drawn breaths, that can be heard a good distance away in the quiet stillness of the night. On one occasion I was greatly entertained watching one of these animals at work, and was struck with the amount of energy he displayed. I was seated on a *machan*, hoping for a shot at a panther, and was consoled for the feline's non-appearance by watching this bear at work in the clear moonlight, just out of effective range. He had a faint suspicion of a human being's proximity, as he occasionally rose on his hind legs and sniffed the air searchingly. I was not sorry that he eventually got away without giving me a shot.

However fond the bear may be of fruit, the real *bonne bouche* in his menu is honey, and it is a sorry look out for any bees whose hives he may come on. I was sitting up one night for a large bear, whose tracks I noticed led nightly down a narrow gorge among some rocky hills of

the Kymore Range. The hills were full of caves, and I had beaten them twice unsuccessfully for this very bear, and now at last decided to sit up at night for him. It was past the full moon, and I could expect no light till about ten o'clock, but waited in hopes that the animal would not put in an appearance before then. My *machan* was built in a *mhowa* tree, and the next tree to mine was a very big one of the *ficus* species, on which there was a large hive of bees. When it was pitch dark and before the moon rose, I heard a few loose stones clicking together on the side of the hill behind me, and shortly after heard the loud sniffing and breathing of a bear. The animal, after a little hesitation, came straight on and mooned about for a time near my tree, and the next thing I heard was an angry swarm of bees buzzing about the branches of the old *bargad* tree (*Ficus indica*). I now heard the bear get very busy; little sniffs, loud blowings, smacking of lips and occasional grunts of satisfaction denoted the old robber was having a good time with the hive. The branch he was on could not have been more than ten yards from where I was seated impatiently waiting for the moon to rise; but luck was on the side of Ursus, as I heard him descend after demolishing the hive and go off into the jungles, whilst it was yet too dark to shoot or even to make him out.

I had rather an amusing night once after bear on this same range of hills, a good bit further south, when I sat up with my wife on a moonlight night on a big rock, that was surrounded by a large patch of wild plum bushes in fruit, which tracks showed were visited at night by bear. A couple of these animals came down early in the night to feed on the plums, but as they did not come within range, I got off my perch and skirted along the edge of the tangle of plum bushes in hopes of getting an easier shot. I came on them suddenly at very close quarters at a spot where I did not expect them. Only one of the animals saw me, and before he could make up his mind as to whether I was a human being or only another of his own species, I fired into his chest. There was a fine old row immediately after my shot, as the wounded one's

companion rushed at him, and both rolled about together, within fifteen feet of me. I left them locked in each other's arms, and hurried back to my perch on the rock, from whence, shortly after, I was able to make out that only one animal left the patch and made for some heavier jungle a little distance away, giving vent to his indignation by low grunts. We then got off our rock and went back to camp, and early the next morning picked up the bear I had fired at and also another I had bagged earlier in the evening.

There must be some fascination—at least I speak for myself—in shooting these animals, otherwise I could hardly have been tempted once by an old Kol shikari into deliberate poaching, on which occasion I got two bears the same morning in the State of an Indian Rajah, who was very jealous of his shooting and preserved it for the highest officials or local friends. It is a long story, and as I have given it in full in "Man-eaters and other Denizens of the Indian Jungles" I shall not repeat it here.

The Sloth bear has only two cubs at a birth, and these are usually born in some cave or other, and are blind for three or four weeks after birth. When they are able to toddle about a bit their mother takes them along with her on her outings, safely perched on her back, clinging to her long hair. A she-bear with cubs is a dangerous beast for an unarmed man to meet, as she charges without hesitation and savages a man dreadfully. I have personally seen a good few cases of men being mauled badly by these bears, and most of these cases occur when people pass through the jungles very early in the morning or late in the evening, going to or returning from distant villages.

Ursus Labiatus, or to give him his new name *Melursus*, is the animal that is so often seen in the United Provinces and Bihar being led about with a string through his nose and his canine teeth drawn, and who is made to perform before an admiring crowd of natives. The poor beast has fallen on sad days when he once becomes the property of a dancing-bear man, for he is led along hot dusty roads in

the terrific heat of summer from village to village, regardless of the fact that he is often frothing at the mouth through want of water, and perhaps hungry also.

These bear are taken very young and are easily tamed, and though the method by which the cubs are caught is accompanied by a certain amount of danger, the risk is gladly accepted by men who consider a dancing-bear a lucrative acquisition. A she-bear is marked down in a particular cave, and the men, getting to know she has very young cubs, watch and wait for nightfall when the mother issues out alone in her search for food. About half a dozen men, who have been watching the cave and seen her go out, light torches and, making a great noise with drums and empty tins, enter the cave, and, wrapping the cubs in blankets to prevent the cries reaching the ears of the old lady, hurry off with their prize.

Late one evening, when strolling out with my wife in some heavy forest near our camp in the Central Provinces after spotted deer, my attention was drawn to our motor driver, who followed behind with cartridge bag, spare rifle, etc. The man was stuttering and appeared tongue-tied, but all the while pointed frantically ahead, when on looking in the direction he pointed, I was rather taken aback to see in the dusk, only five yards from me, a bear standing on its hind legs and looking hard at us over a bush, all the time champing its jaws and bobbing its head up and down. There was no time to notice the ludicrousness of the figure he cut, as he immediately came down on all fours and made straight for us. It was an extremely lucky shot that broke his spine and got us off a bad mauling. As it was, he rolled about almost at my feet, uttering piercing cries of agony and rage whilst he clasped a small sapling in his fore paws and chewed it to fragments before I mercifully put an end to him.

I am afraid I have written at greater length than I intended on the Sloth bear, but as the shooting of this animal has often consoled me for bad luck with tiger, or rather for the absence of a tiger in the jungle I was shooting in, I think I might be pardoned in relating just one more

incident in which I caught a couple of cubs. I was beating for a tiger in some light jungles on low rocky hills in Mysore, and as the beaters approached I clearly saw Stripes was not at home, and so could not resist a shot at a bear that came lolloping past. The animal was struck in the neck, and dropped like a stone, but presently two small balls of black hair disentangled themselves from the body of the fallen animal and crawled about around her. They were two cubs that the mother had been carrying on her back, and which I had not noticed when I fired. It was an amusing and also a pathetic sight to see how these little beasts tried to rouse their mother by clawing and biting at her face. They were game little things, as when the beaters surrounded them they made frantic rushes at the men, trying to frighten them away by fierce growling, alternated with mournful cries of distress and fright. They were however soon captured by throwing blankets over them, and were then carried to camp, crying and expostulating loudly.

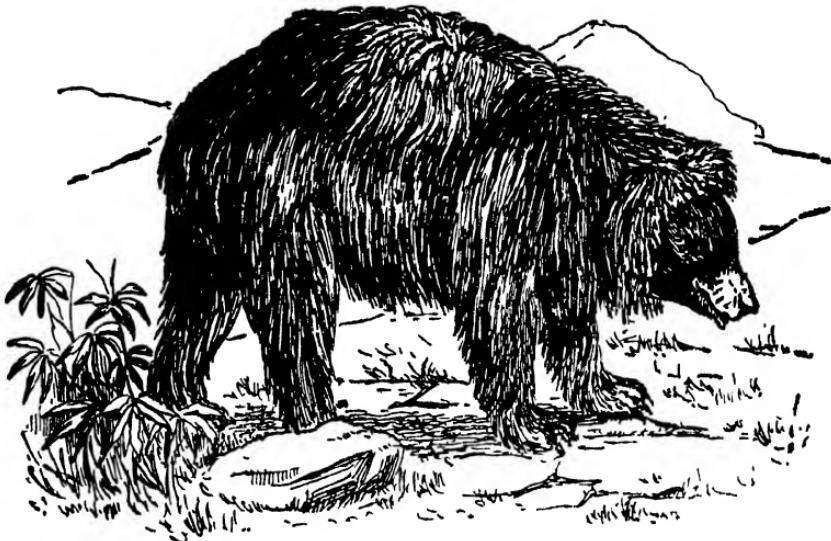
For a whole week these cubs were regular fiends, and, if they failed in their endeavours to get our fingers between their teeth, they turned upon each other and fought furiously, using, I expect, strong ursine Billingsgate, till we found it advisable to tie them out of reach of one another. We were successful in rearing both of them on wheat flour gruel, and were repaid for our trouble by the fun and entertainment we got out of them, though they continued to grow up as wicked and bad tempered a crew as one could ever expect to come across. They thrrove wonderfully after a time, and cost us a good penny in the Indian sweets we bought for them from the bazaars. As soon as these sweets were brought into the house, the little devils followed me about, and I used to disburse the sweets sitting in a long easy chair with a cub sitting, like a dog begging, on each arm of the chair.

They got on fast, both in bodily growth and in rascality, and it was amusing to see how they shinned up trees when their keeper came to chain them up and put them to bed; they had many turn-ups with the dogs, always being the aggressors. If any of my dogs passed by them, the bears

would stand up on their hind legs and strike out at the dog's face with their paws, and when the dog turned on them they would bury their faces in the ground and cover them up with their paws, yelling blue murder the whole time. It was only the fear of master's cane that kept the dogs from finishing them off. The little brutes roamed about the house like pet dogs, and climbed on to and into every article of furniture in the rooms, but unfortunately made an enemy of their keeper, who I am convinced one day administered some poison in their food.

Both of them were taken very ill suddenly, and for a week would accept no other nourishment but raw eggs, which they fought for and sucked up greedily. Just a long breath, and the egg disappeared, and the impatience and peevishness displayed till another was forthcoming and broken for them, was grotesquely funny to see. They got over their illness in due course, and were as mischievous as ever, and I began to get fed up when they took to climbing on to my office table and upsetting the papers, and rolling teapots along the ground. They were a great nuisance when I was travelling about, especially by train, when the guard would turn up and ask me to look up the dog-box, saying the little beggars were scrapping and killing each other.

I was eventually persuaded into giving them away to a wealthy Indian gentleman on his promising to give them a good home and not to separate them, as in spite of their daily quarrels they were pitifully unhappy if kept apart.



CHAPTER X.

THE SLOTH BEAR (*Ursus Labiatus*).

A NATURE STUDY.

The grand old fellow was sick to death, mortally wounded by a bullet fired from the muzzle-loader of Ajit Singh Thakur, when he went to quench his thirst at the close of a hot day during the hottest month of the year. The poor old bear lay huddled up in a corner of his dark and comparatively cool cave, near the top of one of the many rocky hills, that go to form the northern end of the Vindhya Range; he was breathing laboriously and the raging thirst, from which he was suffering and which his wounds made it impossible for him to quench, was fast bringing him to a state resembling delirium in a human being.

He lay still, and visions and memories of his whole life in his beloved hills and valleys passed vividly, as through a kaliedoscope, before his now fast glazing eyes. He dreamt of the first day he had opened his eyes on this beautiful world, when he and his little sister had come to the mouth of the cave in which they had been born, and gazed out into the strong sunlight. In his dream he recalled how powerful and painful this light was to his weak baby eyes, and how

he had been frightened and run back into the cave on hearing the chatter of what he now knew to be only birds of the same forest to which he belonged. He also recalled to mind the rough and tumble games he and his little playmate had whilst their mother was lying asleep in the old cave; he remembered how this same sister of his would often turn on and bite and claw him when she thought he was getting the advantage of her in some way, and how he did the same by her; he was ashamed to remember what quick tempered and quarrelsome little brutes they always were.

In course of time they were taken out by their mother on her nightly peregrinations, clinging tightly to the long hair on her back. She used to allow them to alight now and again and romp about around her, when she thought there was no danger, but would cuff them severely if they ventured too far from her side; they were even more closely guarded when they encountered other bears like herself. He remembered well how on one occasion she had grunted and chased a mangy scavenging hyæna they came on suddenly round a turn in their path; the timid sambar and chital, when met with, were also groused at, but in a milder manner.

A great disaster overtook them one night when a hated human being fired at them from a bush as they went down to a little pool of water to have a drink. He remembered well the flash and explosion that occurred, and felt his little sister fall to the ground; then three or four more human beings rushed out firing off crackers and guns, which frightened away the mother, and throwing a blanket over his little playmate, caught her. They could hear her pitiful screams as they retreated, but they never saw her again.

Later he saw himself growing and gaining strength daily, and accompanying his mother as usual wherever she went, but now on his own feet. He pictured the many combs of delicious honey they secured by climbing up the forest trees; the glorious fruit of the "tendu" (producing the black ebony of commerce), fig and other trees they used to fill themselves with during the time of plenty in the forests. The time just before the cold set in was the

hardest for them. There was no fruit in the forest and they had to content themselves with the small but delicious white ants which they so laboriously dug for and sucked out with long deep inhalations, which could be heard great distances away in the silence of the forest. Then again the large boulders had to be turned over before the grubs and insects, sheltering underneath, could be got at.

They had nothing to fear except the hated thing which walked on two legs, lopping and burning their beautiful forests, and from whom they saw every denizen of the jungle fly. Of course, respect had to be shown to the King of the Forest, the big yellow striped tiger who stalked about at night slaying the poor harmless timid sambar and chital, and even smaller fry when he got the chance. They were often met with a surly growl when they passed some thicket into which His Majesty had dragged his "kill." They invariably made a wide detour on these occasions, partly through cautiousness, and partly from dislike of the nauseating smell of blood and mangled flesh, which emanated from the bush; they were never meat eaters like their more northerly cousins of the Himalayas.

They were quite a match for the cowardly and sneaking panther; sambar and chital minded them not, but the little animal with the ribbed face and small pronged horns, known as the "barking deer," always greeted their appearance with a startled bark; the beautiful pea-fowl, whom they often met on the return journey to their cave at early dawn, hardly turned their heads to look at them.

Oh! it was a glorious life; if only it could have lasted for ever. It came to an end with the advent of another full-grown male bear who came to share their cave with them, and made a hell for him of his hitherto peaceful and happy home. The Gov'nor, as he dubbed the new-comer, made life unbearable. He was rolled over and severely bitten if he went within arm's reach of the surly old fellow at any time, especially when they were grubbing about, picking up fallen fruit under the trees at night. He was bullied and harassed at every turn. Eventually he left his old cave and made his home in another one he found a

couple of miles away. It was a bit lonely at first, but it had grown on him, and been his home ever since. There was a rocky river bed at the foot of the hills which retained water in small pools even at the driest season of the year, and a short distance across, there was the cultivation of the village of Mudholi, which he often visited when the large cobs of Indian corn were at their best.

The fun of these night raids was great. On some occasions he had actually climbed on to the roofs of the huts, and, as stealthily as he could, stolen the juicy cucumbers and pumpkins he found growing on them. The inmates occasionally awoke and made a terrible noise and drove him off, but none had dared to use their long tubes that belched forth fire and smoke, against him. Even while retreating he took care to let those villagers know by his gruff "Wuh! Wuh!" what he thought of them. He almost chuckled when he remembered the delightful grove of date palms near the village, from which the villagers used to draw their supply of "toddy." Many a night found him busily occupied in turning over the contents of the small earthen pots, suspended at the tops of these trees for the collection of the villagers' favourite beverage, into his capacious mouth. He used to return at dawn to his cave from these nightly carousals gloriously drunk and happy, though steady enough on his legs; he had the livelong day to sleep off the effects, and was none the worse when he sallied forth again at dusk to repeat his ursine rascality; but was often disappointed to find the irate owner of the "toddy" trees on the spot, ready to receive him with shouts and yells.

He lived over again one eventful cloudy day, when, instead of retiring into his cave at dawn after his night's outing, he had lain down and fallen asleep under a shelving rock, only half way up the hill. He was suddenly awakened by the sound of human voices almost within a yard of him. He jumped up in a great fright and blindly running into two men, as unconscious of his presence as he of theirs, he rose on his hind legs, and with one powerful downward stroke of his heavy paw, armed with long sharp claws, he had scalped and also torn hideously the face and nose of

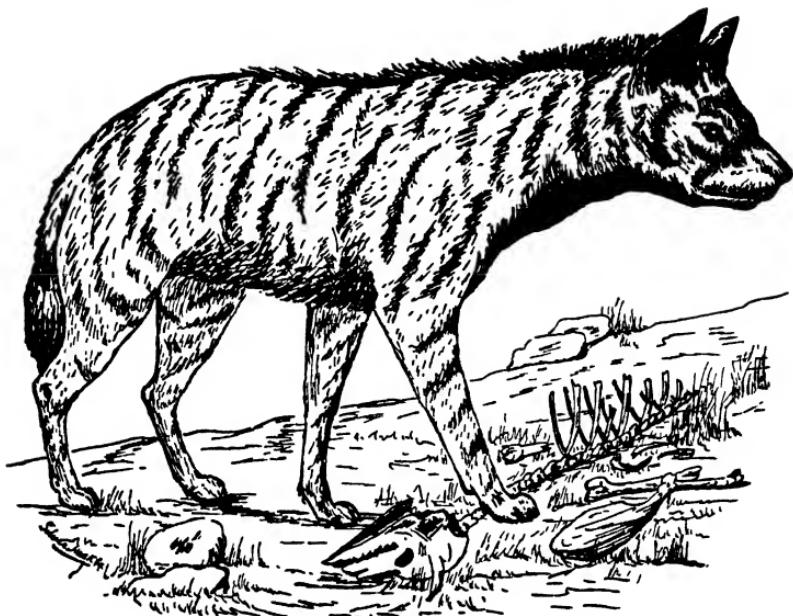
one of them. He only waited to give the hated human a bad bite in the back, and then bolted up the hill to the safety of his cave. It was a long time before he could get rid of the scent of the horrible human being from his nostrils, or the taste of his blood from his mouth.

He had another nasty experience, when he nearly came to grief. It was a hot day, and instead of returning as usual to his cave, he had tried another shallow one, more open to the breeze. About midday he heard a terrific yelling and shouting of men all along the side of the hill, cutting off his retreat to his old home. It was a beat that was taking place. The advice of how to act on such an occasion, given him long ago by his wise old mother, flashed through his brain. He stood up and taking in the situation at once and deciding to face the beaters rather than be driven away in the opposite direction to his cave, he started to run the gauntlet. He found no difficulty in getting through the line of men, after having knocked one of them off his feet and severely mauling him in the side. He did not care a bit for the great commotion he made among the beaters, and got safely away to his cave, from which he refused to budge, even when later on stones and crackers were thrown in at the entrance. From his safe retreat he heard the beat go merrily on and, later, the crack of the long tubes, which he knew from his former experience emitted fire and smoke, followed by the roar of a large tiger who had also been caught napping on the hill side, and who now paid the price of his rashness and stupidity in remaining near the carcass of the fat buffalo so temptingly tied up for him the night before. He took good care not to emerge from his cave till darkness had well set in.

He lived an uneventful though very happy life for many years, sleeping from dawn to nightfall, and roaming over his beloved hills and valleys at his own sweet will from dusk till dawn.

He recalled to mind the loving mate he had taken to himself, and who had never left his side all these years, till only the night before, when Ajit Singh's shot had frightened her so much, that she had fled, he knew not

where. The absence of his mate recalled to his mind the horrible nightmare of the previous evening, when both of them had started cheerfully down the hill on their way to a small pool in the dry river bed for a drink. Though, like the rest of his kind, he was very short-sighted, he had wonderful powers of scent, and he blamed himself for not having taken greater precautions when the whiff of a human being's presence close at hand had been wafted by the breeze to his sensitive nostrils. He had gone blindly on, when he suddenly heard a terrific noise close in front of him, and felt a stinging blow in his chest. He had rolled over and got away as best he could, falling and picking himself up at intervals till he reached the safety of his dear old cave. Oh! The torments of the long weary night that followed. He felt the end was near, and the disgust of having been outwitted by the hated and despised two-legged animal was the last straw. With a long drawn pitiful moan and a heavy sob, *Ursus Labiatus*, the grand old man, turned over on his back and was at rest.



CHAPTER XI.

THE HYÆNA (*Hyæna Striata*).

Hindi, *Charak, Lakar-bagha.* Central India, *Rehra.*
Canarese, *Kat-kirba.*

The hyæna hardly deserves a place in a sportsman's list of the larger wild carnivora of India, but as he is so often to the fore and plays a part in the life of the jungle, cleaning up the remains of tiger and panther "kills," and scavenging round the forest villages, I shall honour him with a place and a few general remarks, being as lenient as possible to his many faults.

The animal is an intermediate form between the cat and dog species, with a closer alliance to the latter. His teeth have not the cutting surface peculiar to the cat tribe, but are blunt and better adapted for crushing purposes, and are controlled by a set of muscles in the jaw, that, in comparison to his size, are more powerful than those that even the tiger is provided with. His feet resemble those of the dog, and the impressions left on the ground are identically the same as left by any big dog, with the points of the claws clearly visible, which is not the case with animals provided

with retractile claws. His coat consists of long wiry grey-coloured hair, with long transverse black stripes over the body, and a mane of longer and coarser hair along the neck and spine to the beginning of his bushy tail. Altogether he is about the ugliest brute that God ever created, with a fiendish-cum-foolish expression on his face, that is beyond my powers of description. His ears stand out above his head and are long enough to act as a sunshade over his ugly face. He is the pariah of the jungle in every sense of the word.

This animal affords no sport of any kind, and his pelt is seldom worth the trouble of taking off, as, except during the winter months, he is usually in a mangy condition. A few I have shot in the hot weather had hardly a hair on their bodies. The hind legs of this queer animal are appreciably shorter than the fore, and in consequence he slopes down from the withers to the hindquarters, and has a most awkward and ungainly gait, and seldom if ever is able to catch game in the jungles. He ekes out an existence on offal and the dead bodies of men's domestic animals, that in India are simply thrown out on the outskirts of villages for vultures and pariah dogs to finish. Along the banks of the Ganges and Jumna rivers he is altogether a repulsive beast, and feeds on the bodies of dead Hindus that have been confided to the waters of those sacred rivers.

The hyæna is an inveterate dog-lifter, and prowls around villages, carrying off all pariahs he can get hold of. A goat or very small calf astray in the jungles is snapped up at once, but the animal is of so cowardly and timid a nature that he hesitates to tackle anything bigger. When sitting up for a panther one moonlight night over a live and very small buffalo calf, two of these beasts began to worry it in a half-hearted way, retreating whenever the little calf faced them. I drove them off without their once getting their teeth into the little animal. Nature has provided the hyæna with remarkably powerful jaws, and it is astonishing to see with what ease he can crack up the largest of bones.

These animals are to be found throughout India, equally at home in heavy forest as in thin scrub and grass jungles. They make their homes in caves, if any are handy, otherwise are content with holes in the ground. They are particularly fond of rocky hills, and Bundelkhund and Central India, generally, swarm with these beasts. North Mysore holds very few, but the tract along the foot of the Nilgiris is infested by them. So far as my own observations go, hyænas are more plentiful in hot arid tracts than in low-lying and heavily wooded country.

The hyæna is absolutely nocturnal in his outings, and is never come across in the day-time, wandering about. I have, however, on a few occasions seen one returning to his lair shortly after dawn, but scurrying all he knew to get in before bright day-light overtook him. For want of better sport I have often shot these animals, and chiefly over panther and tiger "kills," after all hope had fled of the rightful owners putting in their appearance.

It is very entertaining to watch a hyæna over one of these "kills." His powers of scent are highly developed, and he seldom fails to find one out. After watching a carcass for a time, he will circle round it over and over again, and even trot away to scour the surroundings in search of any tiger that may be sneaking up. He has no respect for a panther, but his cowardly nature will not permit his taking any chances, so he puts every "kill" down to a tiger. After providing against being surprised, he will approach the "kill" and start on it, all the while keeping a wary eye open for possibilities. He is still however not comfortable, and will go off every now and again to do a little more scouting; but in spite of his precautions he is often caught red-handed by the rightful owner helping himself to his "kills." I have, however, never yet seen him come to grief, and have noticed he always scurries off in time.

I invariably take the precaution of tying down all "kills" I sit over; otherwise the hyænas would drag them out of sight. On the whole, I welcome their appearance at a "kill," as better scouts could not be found, and they

give one timely notice of the nobler animal's approach. In one of the chapters on the Panther, I have already given a picture of a moonlight scene, where a panther and a hyæna met over the former's "kill."

Sitting up one night in the Doon, I had no less than four hyænas tugging away at the "kill," and was grateful to them for giving me notice by their sudden rapid flight of the approach of the tiger, for which I was watching. They all stared hard at one particularly dark clump of long grass, and then skiddaddled. Shortly after the tiger walked quietly out.

Seeing these scavengers at his "kill" must certainly be annoying to a tiger, but it also gives him a feeling of greater security, and makes him less suspicious of a trap.

It is seldom that the hyæna's voice is heard, and when it is it will only be whilst quarrelling, and then generally over food. The Indian hyæna is very unlike his African cousins, who make night hideous with their mournful cries, and who are plucky enough to break into fences to pull out sheep and goats. One of the spotted variety made himself a thorough nuisance round one of our shooting camps in East Africa, and I was obliged to set a trap gun for him, and so put an end to his prowling and moaning round our camp.

Whilst out after grey partridge one day along the banks of the Jumna River in the United Provinces, I suddenly came on a couple of hyænas in the long coarse grass I was tramping through. They were as much taken by surprise as I was, and jumping up stood within three yards of me. A charge of number four shot into the face of the male dropped him, whilst the other got into their den, outside which they had been lying and sunning themselves when I disturbed them.

The bleating of a goat in the jungles never fails to draw a hyæna, should one be within ear-shot. Three years ago I was camped in a dear little forest bungalow in one of the districts of the Central Provinces, and was greatly worried by a sneaking beast of a panther, who was doing his utmost to get our dogs. At the time I was busy trying

to get a tiger, and did not wish to disturb the jungles by trying for this troublesome little brute, but my patience was exhausted, when one evening he tried to snatch a favourite fox terrier out of my wife's hands. I got a goat and tied it just outside our bed-room window that night after dinner, and after putting out the lights in the house and hanging a hurricane lantern from a convenient bough over the goat, took up my position at the window with my wife to await developments.

The goat called loudly, and we had hardly been at our post half an hour, when my wife quietly drew my attention to the indistinct form of an animal, standing within a few yards of the goat and watching it closely. A charge of buck shot in the chest dropped the beast, but on going up to it, to our disgust instead of a panther which we had hoped to find, only a wretched hyæna was found lying dead. We were consoled, however, for our disappointment the next day by the amusement we got out of watching a crowd of vultures hungrily sitting around and eyeing the hyæna's carcass, and yet fearing to approach it. We found one of our servants had taken the skin off the body, but left the head intact, and even in death the brute's ugly face was repelling to the vultures. We had the head cut off and thrown away, when the birds fell on the carcass and made short work of it.

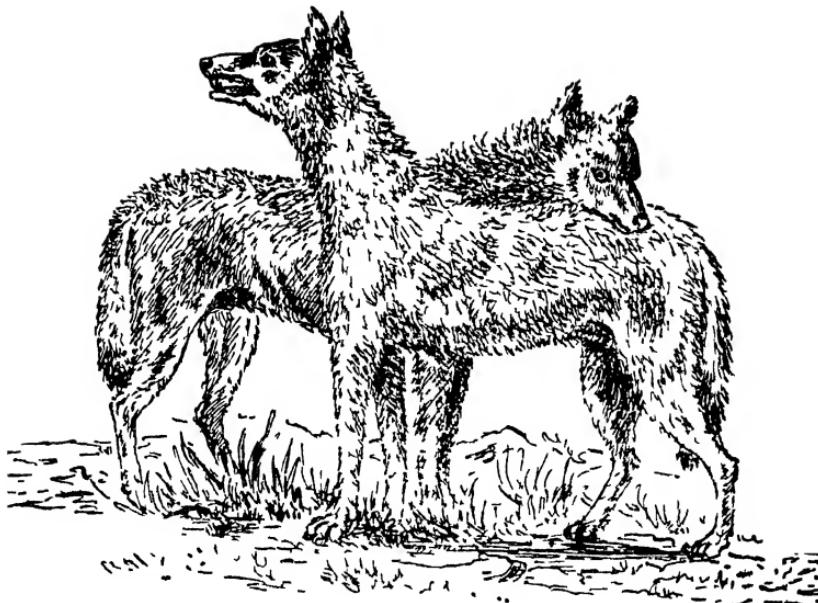
I once witnessed most peculiar behaviour on the part of a hyæna. I was sitting up for bear, and shot one early in the night. The animal as usual made a great row, and running off a short distance, fell in sight of where I was seated. Hearing the brute's cries, a passing hyæna came galloping up and stood over it. I do not think there is any doubt but that he meant to start straight off and make a meal off the fallen bear; so to save the skin I was obliged to shoot him also.

Sitting over a live goat for panther one night, I managed to wound a fine specimen that rushed at the bait, but fell without doing it any harm. He picked himself up and crawled away into a thickly wooded ravine, and as he growled savagely from a dark and dense patch of

cover when I followed him up, I decided to leave him alone till the morning, and returned to my tents. I tumbled into bed, but was awakened about 3 in the morning by the sound of hyænas fighting in the direction I had left the wounded panther, and had a suspicion that they were at it. I accordingly woke up the camp, and taking three men, armed with hurricane lanterns, went off to the spot again. On reaching the ravine I saw a hyæna slink out of some thick bushes, and at once felt my fears regarding the skin of the panther were not groundless. I searched the bushes and came on the panther dead and partially eaten; the wretched hyænas had totally ruined the skin of one of the largest panthers I had ever bagged. Only the head was intact, and this I was able to get set up very well.

I have no doubt that a dead tiger, come on in the jungles by these scavengers, would receive no greater respect, and would meet with the same treatment.

Though the wandering jackal will raise his voice in his weird calls of "Pheanw, Pheanw" on sight of a panther, he will quite ignore the hyæna. I have often on moonlight nights seen jackals and hyænas pass each other with apparent unconcern.



CHAPTER XII.

THE WILD DOG (*Cuon Rutilans*).

Hindi, *Jungli-kutta*, *Son kutta*, *Sonaha*. Canarese, *Kard-nai*.

No tale of the wild carnivora of India can be complete without some mention of the indefatigable hunting dogs of her jungles. He scours the jungles day and night making all its inhabitants fly before him, and within a few days after the arrival of a pack of these dogs, a forest teeming with game is quite deserted by the cervidæ it held; and even the lordly tiger quits for less disturbed areas.

The range of the wild dog stretches from the Himalayas to the extreme south of India, in all forest-clothed tracts. The animal found in the interior of the Himalayas is I think a different variety to that which frequents the country to the south. It is larger, more leggy and lighter coloured, judging from the one specimen I came on and, I regret to say, missed. The wild dog of the plains is of a rusty red with a dark tipped bushy tail, and stands from 18" to 22" in height, with a pointed muzzle and erect ears.

He hunts in packs, and in full chase of an animal the pack spreads itself out, and so provides against any sudden jinking or turning of the quarry. I have heard it said and read that the wild dog gives tongue when in chase, but from my own observations on the three or four occasions when I have seen a chase in progress I cannot say I have ever heard anything beyond a tremulous sort of whimper given out by these animals. The attack is always made on the flanks and the undersides of the animal hunted, who is often disembowelled and brought to a standstill. The sambar gives these dogs a good run, and when hard pressed will take to water, where he stands at bay, and tries ineffectually to beat the dogs off with his horns and fore feet.

A Range Officer, in the Mysore State Service, told me, a few months ago in south Mysore he came on a sambar stag bayed up in a small pool of water by a pack of a dozen of these dogs. On his approach the dogs slunk off, and the sambar, breaking away, bolted for the forest, when the dogs immediately resumed the chase and pulled down the poor beast before it had gone a couple of hundred yards.

Native shikaris have often told me that these animals attack and kill both tiger and panther. I cannot say if there is any truth in this statement, but I know from my own experience, that tigers are so worried by these animals that they will leave the jungle, and even relinquish their "kills" if the dogs come on them. On one occasion I tied out and had a buffalo calf killed by a tiger, but, from marks around the "kill," I saw Stripes had been driven off by wild dogs, who had come on him enjoying his meal, and had taken over the carcass for themselves. Sitting up that afternoon over this "kill," I shot two of the dogs when they returned to resume their feed.

I was once shown a tree in the Mysore jungles with some deep scratches made by a tiger's claws, and the man with me informed me, that one morning he and a companion had come on a tiger jumping up and trying to climb this tree, whilst a small pack of wild dogs surrounded him.

Tiger and dogs, I was informed, decamped immediately on seeing the men.

Though this animal has never been known to attack human beings, he does not show any great fear of man, or hustle himself over much to get out of his way. I have on a few occasions, when shooting in the Central Provinces, come on packs of these dogs sitting out in the glades or on the side of forest lines, but being after better game at the time, have left them undisturbed. They seldom evinced any signs of fear, and provided one did not walk straight up to them, showed no inclination to move off. As a rule, however, the wild dog should never be spared, as there is not a more destructive animal to game of all kinds to be found in the whole jungle.

Deer will not leave a forest that holds a tiger or two, but will flee in large numbers as soon as a pack of these dogs appear on the scene. They are restless animals, and hunt about all day, and often all night. I saw a pack of nine of them one moonlight night in the Doon when sitting up for a tiger, and one morning whilst tramping along a narrow forest line in the same tract of country a doe chital rushed across in front of me, and immediately after I counted no less than a dozen of these dogs, in extended order, also bound across the line in full chase, giving out a small whimpering noise all the time.

These animals are very prolific, and are said to have as many as six pups at a birth. I have myself seen four half-grown ones with their mother, and was able to shoot the mother and two of the cubs.

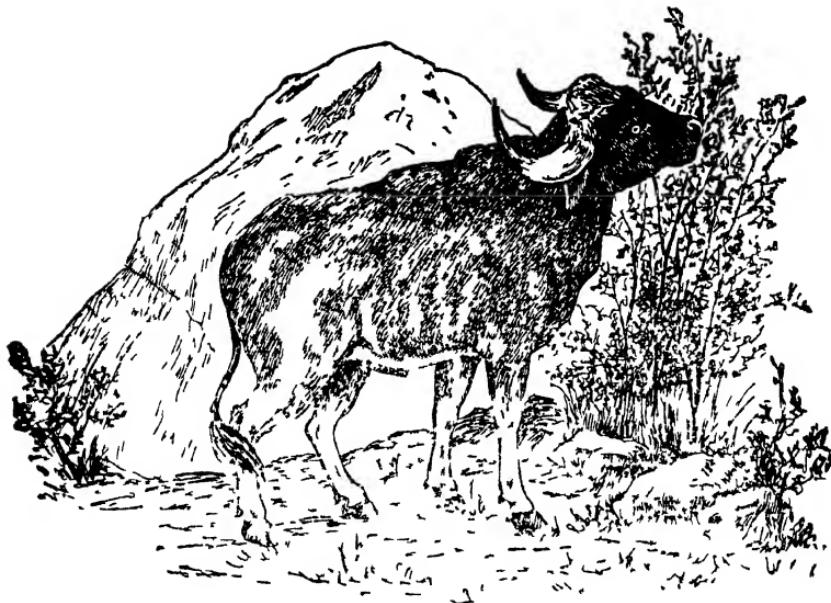
Whilst motoring through some jungles in north Mysore I suddenly came on four. I missed my first shot, and as they scurried off for some thick cover, I brought one down with a shot through the stomach. To illustrate how tenacious of life these animals are, this one got up, and, with his entrails trailing on the ground, covered over a hundred yards before dropping.

If the sportsman comes on these animals and can take cover before he is seen by them, he should have some good sport, as they have a habit of returning to look for

their fallen companions if, as I said, the shooter has not been seen by them. Whilst doing a march in the Central Provinces I came on a pack of nine or ten of them, and managed to bag four by sitting close behind a bush and picking off those that trotted around whimpering and came out to look at those I had already shot. Fortunately a pack never takes up its residence for any length of time in one particular forest or the game would be wiped out; it has constantly to be on the move.

For a long time I had an idea that the wild dog would not live in captivity, but since I have seen a couple of them in the Mysore Zoological Gardens, I have quite changed my views on the subject. Those two looked restless and wild, but otherwise seemed to be flourishing.

I am, however, of the opinion that they cannot be properly tamed.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE GAUR OR BISON (*Gavæus Gaurus*).

Hindi, *Gaur*, *Bun-bodha*.

Canarese, *Kard-kona*.

S. India, *Jungli-khulga*.

Having finished with the carnivora, I shall now write of the animals that are the legitimate prey of the restless and relentless hunters of the jungles, and that form the mainstay of the true forest-living carnivora.

Death stalks at all times along the game paths and haunts of the forest inhabitants; death that is sudden and cruel, and may be met with at any moment under the peaceful shadows of the forest. Yet, in spite of dangers and alarms, life throbs through its course, whether it be of short or ordinary duration.

Nature has gifted the timid cervidæ with marvellously acute senses of sight, scent and hearing, and experience and habitual residence in the midst of danger has helped to still further sharpen these senses till even the slyest and most cunning of the carnivora are hard put to eke out an existence if living solely on the game of their forests.

Where the prey of the tiger, as in the case of the bison, is large and clumsy, Nature has provided that their very size and clumsiness is supported with a spirit and strength that often helps them through their encounters with the largest of the forest carnivora, and makes the latter hesitate to court a mix-up with them.

A herd of spotted deer, though helpless and timid creatures, on the other hand, has many pairs of sharp eyes and sensitive ears ever on the alert to apprise them of the approach of danger. The sambar relies on his scent and hearing solely, and as he is one of the wariest animals of the jungles he can usually take care of himself. But even he comes to grief, and is of all animals the one most sought after and most frequently killed by the true game-killing tiger; the hinds and fawns often succumb to the diabolical cunning of the panther.

Pig, in my opinion, have been served the worst by Nature, and fall an easy prey to the carnivora. They are noisy and on the whole foolish animals, and in forests where tigers and big panthers are common are slowly but surely being wiped out. The grand old boar stands a bit of a chance, and might frighten or even fight off a tiger, but the rest of the family are generally doomed, sooner or later, to a violent end under the velvet paws of the cunning and merciless cat tribe. I have heard and read of big boars coming off victorious in encounters with tigers, but I regret to say in all my wanderings through the jungles I have not come on a single case where the tiger has come off second best. I once interrupted a little fracas between a medium sized boar and a big panther, and I have no doubt that the boar was doomed had I not appeared on the scene.

Every sportsman who tramps much about the jungles cannot but be impressed with the fierce struggle for existence that is always going on around him; the stronger for ever preying on the weaker; merciless murder being enacted in the peaceful looking glades and cool dense covers, amidst peaceful and lovely surroundings. A false step or a careless and unguarded moment is paid for dearly;

there is never any hurry or useless noise in the lives of these animals, unless it is to repair some blunder, or to extricate themselves from a dangerous position in which they have suddenly been plunged. Danger lurks even around their drinking pools and streams, as also at their salt licks, for the stealthy and cunning tiger and panther, knowing their ways and habits, often lie in wait for them in such places.

I trust the reader has not been bored or considers the above lines irrelevant. They have been written with the sole idea of depicting the lives of the deer and other animals that are constantly haunted and harried by the carnivora of the jungles. I leave it to him to form his own opinion as to whether the lot of these animals kept in captivity in such places as zoological gardens and parks in comfortable and congenial surroundings, and a plentiful supply of both food and water all the year round, and freedom from constant fear for their lives, is preferable to that of the same animals roaming in freedom in their natural haunts, but labouring under an ever present fear and dread. Having given these few introductory lines, I shall now write giving a short description of the ways and habits of these animals in their natural state, taking the bison first of all, both on account of his size and the grand trophy he offers the sportsman.

The habitat of this animal lies in all the large and heavy forests that extend from the extreme south of the Peninsula to a line drawn across from the Vindhya Range to the source of the Nerbudda River, and possibly in the Himalayan terai at the foot of the Bhutan hills. I have not come on them in the Nepalese terai, where I have done a fair amount of shooting. Burmah is said to boast of the best heads, but Southern India, especially the Wynnaad and the Anamalai hills, holds the largest numbers. They are plentiful also in Southern Mysore, along the foot of the Nilgiris, and on the Western Ghats.

Gaur are particularly fond of hilly country, and are extremely shy and retiring animals; they have no use for man and his cultivation, and do not enter and damage crops,

but keep to the thickest and heaviest parts of the forest. There is a particular long but fine kind of grass growing in small open places on the sides and tops of the hills that the animal is very fond of, and it is these grassy spots that the sportsman should become acquainted with. Repairing to these spots in the morning or late in the afternoon, he has every chance of coming across the herd or the solitary bull grazing quietly and unsuspicuous of danger. The tender leaves of the bamboo are also a great favourite with the bison, whilst bamboo forests are pet lying-up places for him. When feeding on bamboo the noise made by the canes springing back into place after the tender tops have been nibbled off can be heard a good distance away, and the sportsman after bison in bamboo jungle should make it a practice of sitting down every now and again to listen for the pleasant swish of the bamboos that denotes bisons are on the feed. Whilst seated having a rest, he may also hear the animal call; a soft mooing sound not very unlike that made by English cattle.

These animals feed during the greater part of the night and late into the morning till the sun begins to make itself felt, and they then lie up during the heat of the day, but are on the move again in the afternoon. During the hot months of the year they generally drink during the early afternoon and even at midday.

The Gaur is a restless animal, in that he is seldom to be found in the same tract for any length of time. A herd will stop a week or so in a particular patch, and then as the grazing gets less or is trampled down they move on, probably a good few miles to fresh pastures. There is a distinct and powerful bovine smell where a herd has rested for a day or two, quite as powerful as that around an old cattle enclosure. A jungle much frequented by bison will always be found to be infested with ticks.

A solitary bull is chiefly sought after by the sportsman, for obvious reasons; he is sure to carry a good head; there is less chance of committing a blunder and shooting a cow—an almost unpardonable sin—in the thick cover that bison as a rule inhabit; there is also a feeling that the solitary bull

is past his best, and is no longer likely to be of use to the herd. Besides the above reasons, it somehow appeals more to the sportsman to take up a single track and follow it to the end than to follow on the heels of a herd and take his chance of the bull having a really shootable head, and also the chance, which unfortunately frequently happens, of being detected by one of the cows just as the quarry is within his grasp. It is a very common occurrence, when the herd is at last come up with, for the sportsman to find that the vital spots on the magnificent bull are protected by the bodies of some of his harem; before he can get his rifle on to the coveted mark he is either seen or winded by one of the members of the herd, when perhaps a whole day's toil and patient slogging is thrown away, and the herd crashes off, not to be come up with again that day.

Of all sport, that the jungles of India offer the sportsman, none in my estimation can compare with that of the chase of the mighty and shy bison. My pen is quite incapable of depicting fully the fascination of a real good day after this grand animal. Even an unsuccessful day is lived over and over again, and though dog tired, the sportsman, immediately on his return, plans for another try, determined to master the bad luck of the day just passed.

To obtain the fullest enjoyment out of the sport, in my opinion, the animals should not be too plentiful, or the ground be too easy and open. The track of a good bull should be picked up early in the day, and then a good tracker set to work to follow it over hill and valley to the bitter end. To watch a capable tracker, such as a Gond or Baiga of the Central Provinces, at work is a real pleasure to the sportsman. Nothing escapes the man's notice; a nibbled blade of grass, cobwebs across the path, the dew in the slots and the freshness of the droppings, to determine which the big toe of the tracker invariably and infallibly acts as a thermometer, are all closely scrutinized, and conclusions and deductions rapidly arrived at. Many of these signs are hardly perceptible to European eyes even when pointed out, but they are as an open book to the capable and experienced tracker.

It is only time and energy wasted to try and help such men when sporing, and the sportsman does better by following close behind and holding himself in reserve for the time when the tracks go to show that the animal he is after is at last within measurable distance of being sighted. Interference with the tracker can be of no earthly use unless the sportsman finds he has got hold of an incompetent man, when of course he is justified in doing what he can himself. However, as a rule, if it comes to this state of affairs, his chances of a shot are poor indeed, as he will probably be already very tired, and bending and scrutinizing tracks and forcing his way gently and quietly through heavy cover will just about make him wish to turn homewards.

The chase of this animal calls for the utmost endurance, perseverance and patience the sportsman is capable of. Blank days are many, but yet they must be taken cheerfully, and it is a fatal mistake to overdo it and stale to the work. A day or two a week will just about be enough for an ordinary man, and will keep him fit and fresh.

Since the introduction of game laws in the country, the number of bison allowed to be shot in Government forests is wisely limited to a very few head. The animals are very subject to rinderpest and other cattle diseases, introduced by the village herds that are brought for grazing to the forests, and in some seasons, when sickness is prevalent, die off in large numbers. Personally, I think the animals should be still more closely preserved in the forests of the Central Provinces, and in other forests where they are not too plentiful. It is a pity to wantonly destroy such grand beasts, and no sportsman, worth the name, ever lays himself out to shoot any but good heads, and then contents himself with as few as possible.

I have not come on a case, where a big bull has been pulled down by a tiger, but have more than once come on the carcasses of cows and calves that have been killed by tigers. Only those cows that have separated a little from the herd are attacked and killed, for the tiger never attempts to take one out of the herd; the solitary bull is considered too tough a customer for a single tiger to tackle.

To give a brief description of the animal, I cannot do better than quote from Jerdon's "Mammals of India"— "The skull is massive; the frontals large, deeply concave, surmounted by a large semi-cylindric crest rising above the base of the horns. There are thirteen pairs of ribs. The head is square, proportionately smaller than in the ox; the bony frontal ridge is five inches above the frontal plane; the muzzle is large and full, the eyes small, with a full pupil of a pale blue colour. The whole of the head in front of the eyes is covered with a coat of close short hair, of a light greyish-brown colour, which below the eyes is darker, approaching almost to black; the muzzle is greyish and the hair is thick and short; the ears are broad and fan-shaped; the neck is sunk between the head and back, is short and thick, and heavy. Behind the neck and immediately above the shoulder rises a gibbosity or hump of the same height as the dorsal ridge. This ridge rises gradually as it goes back, and terminates suddenly about the middle of the back; the chest is broad; the shoulder deep and muscular; the forelegs short, with the joints very short and strong, and the arm exceedingly large and muscular; the hair on the neck and breast and beneath is longer than on the body, and the skin of the throat is somewhat loose, giving the appearance of a slight dewlap; the forelegs have a rufous tint behind and laterally above the white. The hindquarters are lighter and lower than the fore, falling suddenly from the termination of the dorsal ridge; the skin of the neck, shoulders, and thigh is very thick, being about two inches and more.

"The cow differs from the bull in having a slighter and more graceful head, a slender neck, no hump; and the points of the horns do not turn towards each other at the tip, but bend slightly backwards, and they are much smaller; the legs too are of a purer white. The very young bull has the forehead narrower than the cow, and the bony frontal ridge scarcely perceptible. The horns too turn more upwards. In old individuals the hair on the upper parts is often worn off. The skin of the under parts when uncovered is deep ochrey-yellow."

Only a few further observations, I think, are necessary to give a complete description of this animal. No mention has been made regarding its great size, nor of the grand trophy it offers; both matters of the first importance to the sportsman. A full-grown bull stands anything between 17 to 19 hands in height, and its girth is between 7 feet to 8 feet; an average pair of horns from tip to tip across the forehead tapers 5 feet and over. I have read of a famous pair that measured 6 feet 11 inches; the same pair had a circumference of 19½ inches at their base.

The Gaur, in spite of the reputation given it by many native shikaris of being a fierce brute that charges at sight, is, on the whole, timid, and will try to get away if it possibly can even when wounded. Solitary bulls, however, have been known to charge, and instances are recorded of sportsmen and native shikaris being badly hurt or even killed by them. Personally I have no exciting incident of this nature to narrate, as I have never yet been charged by one.

I fired at and anchored a very fine bull in some thick forests of the Central Provinces with a single shot from a .375 Mannlicher. The animal was only able to walk along after the shot, and in face of repeated warnings from the Gond shikari accompanying me, I walked up to it to test the truth of their charging when wounded. The poor beast showed no inclination whatever to charge me beyond shaking his horns threateningly; I mercifully put him out of pain with two more shots.

In the excitement of the chase after bison, the sportsman has to exercise the greatest of patience, and must very closely scrutinize the game when he comes up with it, for even the most experienced have to be careful that a cow does not fall to his rifle. At a distance in thick cover, or in long grass in the glades, a bull is not easily distinguished from a cow. The horns are very much alike, and so is the general shape of the body seen through a tangle of undergrowth and high grass. A good pair of glasses, carried in such a way as to be handy at a moment's notice, is a *sine qua non* when after bison, for very little credence

should be placed in the assurances of the native tracker that the animal in sight is a bull, and no heed should be taken of his whispered exhortations of " Maro, maro " (" Shoot, shoot "). The man, as a rule, is indifferent to whether a bull or a cow falls, so long as the day is not a blank one. It is just as likely that the animal seen standing alone is a cow, with its calf lying alongside, hidden in the long grass ; the bull very possibly being on ahead.

A herd of bison may consist of any number from half a dozen to forty, and there is usually a grand bull in charge, with possibly a few younger and lighter coloured animals. The biggest herd I have ever seen consisted of twenty-seven with a grand bull, almost black in colour, and with two other shootable bull's in it. I came on them late one evening on a high and open plateau, surrounded by thick sal forests, but due to the open nature of the ground could not approach closer than four hundred yards. I sat down under cover of a small clump of trees in hopes of the herd grazing to within effective range. I noticed a magnificent bull, almost black in colour, was lord and master of the herd, whilst two younger but still very fine specimens hung about on the flanks of the herd with a small following of cows in attendance. After a time these two bulls with their cows gradually grazed in my direction, and ultimately, just as it was getting too dark to shoot, I selected the better of the two and shot it. Though I was coveting the grand old fellow with the herd, I consoled myself with the one I had bagged, as my binoculars told me he carried a better head than the master of the herd. The latter's horns were massive, but I could see they had been worn down a great deal at the tips, and in actual measurements were inferior to the pair I had secured.

The end of this chase found me seven miles from camp, but fortunately only three from a point on a motorable road where my wife was waiting for me in our car. A pitch dark night was fast descending on us, and it was a terrible business cutting off the head of the big bull, and carrying it as far as the car over rough and difficult ground, and I felt we would never have accomplished it, but for the

lantern which my wife's forethought had made one of the men bring along when we first started out in the morning. On getting to the car my wife informed me that a fine panther had crossed the road at dusk, only twenty yards from the spot in which she had been waiting. The skin of the bull was brought in next day by a number of villagers who went out to bring in the meat for themselves.

In the Mysore Zoo I saw a young bull of about two years of age I should think, besides two or three young calves. It will be interesting to see whether these animals will ever reach full maturity, as most sportsmen and naturalists are of opinion that the Indian bison will not thrive or even live in captivity after they attain three or four years of age. The bull was tame and at large, but what seemed incongruous was, his nose had been bored and a string passed through, similar to that observed in the cart bullocks throughout the country.

Writing of the Gaur recalls to memory many hard but enjoyable days spent in its chase, but I shall content myself with narrating in the next chapter a long and successful hunt I had after a grand old bull; a chase that is typical of many another chase that I, and I expect other sportsmen, have had after the grandest animal that the Indian jungles hold.

From it the reader will grasp what patience, perseverance and downright hard work the hunt of the shy and mighty bison demands of the sportsman, and that the prize is well worth any amount of trouble and toil to secure.



CHAPTER XIV.

A MIGHTY BULL.

A TYPICAL CHASE.

News was brought into the station that a savage old bull bison had taken up his quarters at some water near a forest village called Markandi, and that it attacked all who went near the spot. Markandi was more than thirty miles out, half the distance being only a bad cart track, and more than a month elapsed before I could arrange to get there.

My tents were pitched close to the village in a shady grove of trees, but as it was early November I found the mosquitoes made sleep practically impossible, and that the water from the only well in the village was almost undrinkable; hardships which keen sportsmen have often to put up with, with nothing more than a short grouse. The rains had only lately given over, and the undergrowth in the forests was unusually thick and impenetrable, and snakes were very commonly met with. Whilst on the subject, I might mention that on my arrival here two large cobras were found trying to get in under the walls of my tent, and were promptly dispatched by my orderly.

The old bull, I found on inquiry, had been wounded in the leg by an Indian shikari a few miles from the spot, and had taken up his quarters at some water near the head of a gorge called Amanallah, in some flat dense forests at the foot of thickly wooded hills. He had been wounded in the foreleg, and, evidently, finding it difficult to negotiate the hills, had kept to the flatter and easier forests at the bottom. The animal, I was told, had recovered from his wound and gone off a fortnight before I arrived on the scene. I also gathered from my inquiries that the tales of his chasing men, who happened to go near the water, were rather exaggerated. He had only been seen half a dozen times, when he had snorted loudly and even made a demonstration of charging, but had never left the thick jungle he lay up in to chase anyone. Anyway, he was dangerous so long as he remained there, and though disappointed at his having moved off, I felt it was perhaps best that he had done so before anyone was hurt or even killed. As he was reported to be a regular monster in size, carrying a grand pair of horns, I decided to stop on and try and get a smack at him.

Juria Gond, the best tracker in the locality, and my companion in former successful stalks, eagerly joined up. He was a small spare middle aged man, very willing and untiring, and the skill with which he could pick up a fresh track and follow it through the livelong day, in and out of numerous cross tracks, was simply marvellous to me. Though I had considerable experience of other trackers, Juria, in my estimation, was *facile princeps* in following spoor of wounded and unwounded animals. A crushed blade of grass, a half nibbled leaf on a bush, the dew in the slots, the fine cobwebs across the narrow jungle paths, each and all had their meaning for him; in fact these signs were an open book to him. He never hesitated from the moment at dawn, when he picked up a track, till the time, even though it might be dusk, he brought the sportsman up to the animal he was after.

Accompanied by Juria, that evening, I visited the water of Amanallah. There was not much to be learnt there. I only saw from the old tracks at the water's edge that this

bull must indeed be the monster he was reported to be, probably eighteen to nineteen hands at the highest point of his dorsal ridge, to have been able to reach the leaves he had browsed off some of the bushes.

Juria and I decided that we should start at dawn and wander about the forest, picking up any especially large track of a solitary bull and following it up till a sight of the animal settled the question as to whether or not it was the one we were after. There were signs of a good number of bison in the bamboo-clad forests on the sides and tops of the surrounding hills, and it was some time before Juria picked upon a good enough track to follow up. We stuck to this track till midday, on two occasions disturbing small herds of other bison, but failing to come up with the animal we were after. It was most difficult and tiring work tramping up and down these hills, and pushing through the thick undergrowth as quietly as possible.

The chase of the mighty and shy bison calls for all the strength and endurance of the sportsman and so often ends in failure; but yet it has a fascination of its own, and once success is met with, and he stands admiring his grand trophy, the weary and footsore hunter feels there is no other kind of sport to compare with it.

I was weary enough by midday and called a halt near a small stream, and, after finishing the sandwiches and cold tea I had taken along with me, lay down in some deep shade and rested for a couple of hours during the heat of the day; Juria's only refreshments being a thick black cake of flour, eaten with a red chillie and washed down with water, and some atrocious looking tobacco he produced from his loin cloth and smoked through a green leaf, rolled into the shape of a funnel. He had never owned a box of matches in his life, thinking they were a superfluous luxury, but got his light by means of a flint, a piece of steel, and a very dirty bit of cotton wool. The tobacco must have been just as nasty as its smell, as it brought the tears to his eyes after every long pull. He now fell asleep, apparently without a care in the world.

On getting to my feet I felt very inclined to make for camp, already eight miles away, but Juria begged of me to go on for only another mile, as he was certain the animal we were after would be lying up on the sides of a certain *nullah* he knew of, which held water and was not more than a mile further on. I consented, and was rewarded by the sight of a fine solitary bull standing in some light bamboo jungle on the side of the *nullah* Juria had spoken of. He gave me a grand shot, less than a hundred yards off, but Juria dissuaded me from firing as he said this was too young an animal to be the hoary old Amanallah bull we were seeking. I was very disappointed at having to forego the shot, but quite agreed with him, that the fewer shots fired in the locality, the greater chance I would have of bagging the old Amanallah bull. I knew well from practical experience how a few reports from a rifle cleared vast tracts of forest of every bison within miles around. There was nothing for it but to start on the dreary tramp back to camp.

The next morning I was too stiff and sore for another long day after bison, so stayed in camp and sent Juria out with another man to try and locate the one animal I had now set my heart on getting. Juria returned late in the afternoon and reported that he had come on the tracks of a monster bull in some marshy land, and had followed them up and come on the beast itself in some very thick cover on a hill, only four miles from camp. He had seen it from a distance of only twenty-five yards, sitting under a big tree, calmly chewing the cud, and felt sure that it was the old bull we were so anxious to bag. He had quietly slunk away, leaving it there undisturbed, and returned to camp. He now said he hoped to find it very easily next day. We started at dawn, and Juria easily picked up the tracks of the night before, as there were no other bison just then in that particular block of forest. It was easy work for the old tracker to follow this trail, and about midday, when we were proceeding extra cautiously, expecting to come on him any moment, suddenly a sambar stag jumped up almost at my feet, and with a loud bell rushed off down the hill.

Immediately there was a crash of a large animal close on our right, rushing through some long grass. I only caught a glimpse of a huge body disappearing and did not see any use in firing, as I knew it would only be to wound if I did so. Disgusted, we took up the tracks, and though we came up with him twice he was now thoroughly on the *qui vive*, and on each occasion he got our wind and crashed off into the thick undergrowth, without giving me even a ghost of a chance of getting in a good shot.

A dreary trudge home again, late in the evening, made me only more determined than ever to get this coveted trophy. Poor untiring Juria was sent out the next day to again find the old bull, but for three long days, during which my patience was tried to the uttermost, he could find no trace of the animal. Then he cast around at the most unlikely place of all, the Amanallah gorge, when he at once came on the eagerly sought for tracks near the spot the bull had frequented when suffering from his wounded leg. The animal had drunk at Amanallah and had, after grazing about, just before dawn, lain up for the day near the water. As it was too late for anything to be done that evening, we decided to have another try for him early the next morning.

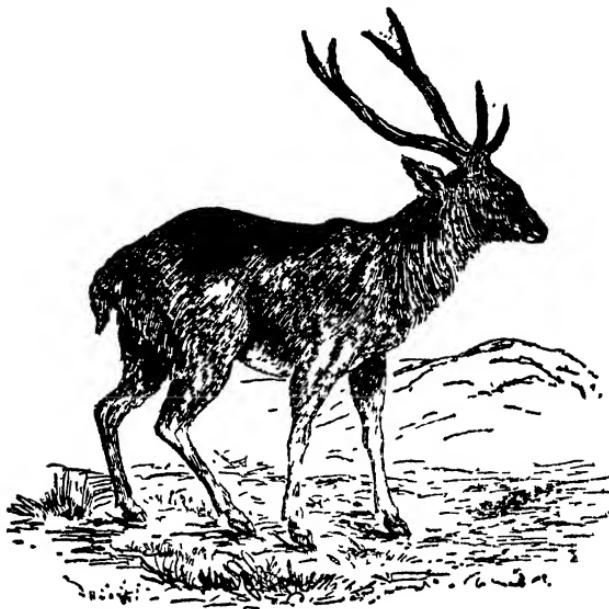
We were astir at dawn, and finding his tracks at the water followed on. I was rather depressed to find the tracks leading up the side of a thickly wooded low hill, but had only gone a mile, when I heard a bison give its low call, not very unlike the "Moo" of an English cow; we knew we were close to the game at last. A little further on we heard the swish of bamboos flying back into position after being pulled down for the soft topmost leaves to be got at; the sweetest of sounds to reach the bison hunter's ear, and for which an experienced hand at the game often sits down on a hillside to listen. With my Paradox, loaded with a heavy charge of cordite and conical copper bullet, I crept after grand old Juria. We came cautiously to the edge of a glade of soft long grass, and in the centre of it was our game, browsing unsuspectingly off a small clump of bamboos. This was the moment we had lived and worked for, for the last seven days. The grand old bull came to his knees with

the first bullet, and as he found his feet again I brought him down for good with my second barrel. It would take a better pen than mine to describe my feelings as I stood and gloated over the magnificent pair of horns the old warrior carried. He was a prize well worth the trouble I had gone to, and his hide is now to be seen in the shape of a fine cabin trunk, greatly prized and treasured by my wife.

The scar of a lately healed wound was to be plainly seen on his right shoulder, so that I had no doubt in my mind that this was the animal who had frightened the inhabitants of Markandi, when they went near the water in the Amanallah gorge.

I heard, years afterwards, that good old Juria had joined the happy throng of other good and fearless trackers, having been fatally mauled by a wounded tigress he was helping a sportsman to track up.

He had, when only a youth of thirteen, seen his father killed by a bear before his own eyes. Both were simple but grand fellows in their way, whose prowess as fearless trackers and shikaris will be long proudly spoken of in the village of Markandi by the simple forest folk.



CHAPTER XV.

THE SAMBAR (*Rusa Aristotelis*).

Hindi, *Sambur, Maha, Jerao.*

Canerese, *Karawa.*

We now come to the cervidæ, the most persecuted and hunted of all animals of the jungles; hunted both by the wild carnivora and by man. The sambar belongs to the rusine type, having only six points to his antlers, each of which consists of the royal tine with brow and tres tines only. The beam is massive, and just above the burr is from eight to nine inches in circumference, and a really good pair of horns measures from 40 inches to 45 inches in length, though I have been told of, but not personally seen, a pair of $51\frac{1}{2}$ inches, lately secured in the Satpuras. A large stag will stand quite fourteen hands in height, and is a grand looking animal with its large bell-shaped ears and shaggy mane of coarse stiff hair round the throat. The colour varies a little with the seasons, but as a whole may be described as a dark brown; the inside of the limbs and underneath the tail is of a lighter tint, almost yellowish. The animal has deep eye pits, which are always moist with some sort of secretion.

The true type of cervidæ, such as the Kashmir stag (Hangal) and barasinga (Goen) of India, shed their horns annually, and, personally, I am of opinion that the sambar does so also, but only up to a certain stage of its growth. I know this assertion of mine will not meet with the approval of many naturalists and sportsmen, who are I consider inclined to be a bit dogmatic in their belief that every sambar casts his horns regularly every year without fail. The only evidence I have in support of my opinion is the fact of my having occasionally secured a pair of horns when all the other animals I came across in the same tract of forest were either deeply in velvet or had their horns hardening. I have also had repeated assurances from native shikaris, who were constantly in the jungles and able to mark and note particular individuals, that the old and best stags cast their horns only once in every three years. I am open to correction and conviction should I be wrong, but think this matter can only be cleared up by marking and observing fully matured animals in captivity, in zoological gardens. If I remember rightly, Forsyth, author of "The Highlands of Central India," held the same views as myself.

Whether I am right or wrong in my view of these exceptional cases, I admit that sambar can only be confidently expected to be in hard horn during the winter months; any seen after 1st April and up to the end of September, with these few exceptions, will almost to a certainty be found in velvet. After the old horns are shed, the growth of a new pair, which eventually will attain a larger size than the last, is started, and it is really hard to realize the speed with which these grow.

These new horns are of a fibrous nature; full of small blood vessels covered with a soft skin resembling velvet, which gradually shrivels up and pits the horns on their surface as they ossify. The animal helps to rid the horns of their velvet-like covering by rubbing them gently against small and tender saplings in the forest. Wherever these rubbings on saplings are noticed in a forest, the sportsman

may confidently expect to find sambar and chital in the neighbourhood.

The description given by Jerdon of the whole process of the growth and hardening of the horns, cannot I think be improved upon, and so I quote from him. "As the horns ossify the periosteal veins become enlarged, growing the external surface; the arteries are enclosed by hard osseus tubercles at the base of the horns, which coalesce and render them impervious, and, the supply of nutriment being thus cut off, the envelopes shrived up and fall off, and the animals perfect the desquamation by rubbing their horns against trees, technically called 'burnishing.'"

I had for many years in my possession a remarkably fine pair of horns, 41 inches in length, and with an extraordinarily wide spread. The animal was shot by my wife in the Hoshungabad district of the Central Provinces; a district that boasted of some grand heads. The horns were a very symmetrical pair, and free of the little snags, one so often sees in sambar heads. Many abnormal and deformed antlers are carried by sambar, and it is rather uncommon to secure a really fine and symmetrical pair.

The sambar is found throughout India, from the Himalayas, where he is called "the Jerao" by the Paharis (hill men) to the extreme south, and also in Ceylon and Burmah. The animal frequents hilly country, but may be found in broken ground and ravines, when such are not too distant from forest-clothed hills. He is entirely a nocturnal animal in his outings, and lies up in thick cover from dawn to nightfall, taking up a position on some spur or ridge from which he commands a good view of the ground and forest stretching out beneath him. He is an extremely wary beast, and is gifted with marvellously acute powers of scent and hearing. He is very shy of facing open ground, except on dark nights, when, unlike the bison, he often visits cultivation and feeds on the crops. These raiders of crops, however, will usually be found to be small stags and does; the grand old specimens seldom leave the shelter of the forest, and generally share the thickest and remotest covers with the bison. I have frequently put up grand sambar

stags when out after Gaur, but have denied myself the shot for fear of disturbing the forest and driving away the nobler game.

Sambar can hardly be called gregarious in habits, as they are seldom met with in herds of more than five or six animals; usually only two or three are found together, and just as often, a stag by himself. Though fond of water, these animals do not drink every night where the forest is much disturbed by native shikaris and will content themselves with a drink only once in three days. In spite of this the poor beasts are shot in large numbers over water on moonlight nights by these shikaris, who, in most parts of the country, break every game law and poach with impunity, relying on their friendship or even relationship with the badly paid forest guards and subordinate police officials. Small and judicious gifts of meat to these guardians of the law act as a marvellous incentive to keeping their eyes shut to what is going on around them.

As the cold weather sets in—in most parts of India about November—the sambar start what is known as wallowing, and at night roll in the mud and slush at the edges of tanks and pools. From my own observations, these mud baths are chiefly indulged in during the small hours of the morning, and the colder the weather the more these animals seem to enjoy these rolls. The native shikaris mark these wallowing pools and give the animals a hot reception when they turn up on moonlight nights. Salt licks are also sat up over, and many a fine stag falls to the gun of the lurking and closely hidden shikari.

These licks are come on in many parts of the forests, and I have noticed from tracks around them that the deer visit them more during the rains than at any other time of the year. The licks are often in the bank of a *nullah* or ravine, and are big excavations made by the constant licking of the deer, and by their feet in attempts to break down the saline earth. Besides the native shikari, the sambar has to be on the alert that he is not pounced on by a tiger as he approaches a salt lick, for the cunning carnivora prowl around and lie in wait at these spots. I remember one

morning, when strolling through one of the Doon jungles, I came on a salt lick and saw a tiger, which had been lying near it, bound off into some thick undergrowth. He was too quick for me and got away into cover before I could bring my rifle to my shoulder.

I do not think the jungles hold a more wary animal than an old sambar stag, and it is surprising how stealthily and quietly the beast can tread over ground that is covered with dried leaves. When sitting up over a tiger "kill" I have often become aware of the presence of a sambar stag in the surrounding jungle by the occasional knocking of his horns against a tree or bamboo, and have noticed that, rather than face the moonlight, he will continue grazing during the livelong night in some dark patch less than a hundred yards square. I always welcome the presence of these cunning and stealthy animals near a "kill," as no tiger can approach without being seen or scented by them, when the sambar's loud clanging note, commonly spoken of by sportsmen as "the bell," gives him away at once and puts the watcher on his guard.

This note of alarm or bell varies in intensity with the extent of fear and excitement of the animal. A panther, unless a very big specimen, is greeted with only one or two careless bells, but a tiger calls forth a loud and prolonged series of bells, and an experienced sportsman can always tell which of these two animals is disturbing the equanimity of the alert stag.

In spite of the great precautions taken by sambar against being surprised, large numbers are killed by the larger carnivores of the jungles. It is doubtful whether large stags are ever pulled down by panthers, but I have come on many hinds and fawns killed by them, and I have, not infrequently, shot stags that bore unmistakable signs on their bodies, in the way of deep claw marks and scratches, of having been pounced by tigers, and yet shaken them off and got away. The true game-killing tiger is ever on the prowl after sambar, and waylays and kills many, up in the fastnesses of the forest. I have generally found in these cases, the animals have been pounced on and killed as they

browsed or grazed towards a game path or glade, in which the footfalls of their stealthy stalkers have not been distinguishable. In thickets with a lot of undergrowth, the sambar is usually more than a match for the most cunning of tigers.

Often, when sitting up at night, I have heard the sambar's note of alarm, followed by the crash of his retreat through the forest, and shortly after has come the disappointed and disgusted growl of the stalker, denoting the giving up of his unsuccessful stalk.

Amongst the sambar's most relentless persecutors is the wild dog. His fate is generally sealed if a pack of these animals gets on his track; no amount of cunning or flight can save him at such times. He is run to a standstill, or is disembowelled in his flight by these voracious dogs, who jump at and hang on to his flanks and undersides. If he reaches water, he stands at bay and strikes out at his pursuers with his horns and forefeet, but ultimately succumbs to their fierce attacks.

There are three methods by which sambar are shot by sportsmen; the first is by stalking them at dawn or late in the evening; the second by shooting them off elephants; and the third by beating for them with a line of men. The first method I think will be admitted by all to yield the best sport, though the remaining two methods do not fall far short in enjoyment, and can be resorted to at any time of the day, and with probably better prospects of success.

In a beat, sambar, more than any other kind of deer, show a great inclination to break back through the beaters; standing concealed in some thicket, they will patiently await the approach of the men and will take advantage of any gap they notice in the line to break through, defying all attempts to turn them. The animals are also adepts at stealing noiselessly through the jungle, just ahead of the beaters, and then with a frantic rush and clatter getting past the posted guns. If two or three sambar are afoot in a beat, it will generally be found the old stag hangs behind to the last, allowing the hinds to take the brunt of the danger.

To see the animal at his best, the sportsman should be an early riser, and, after a hurried cup of tea or coffee, endeavour to reach some spot in the forest that commands a good view of the surrounding country, just as the first flush of day-light tinges the tops of the trees. Taking up such a position, with the aid of his glasses he should closely scan the ground stretching away beneath him for dark objects, making in the direction of the hills or rising ground. These objects as they approach closer will turn out to be either sambar or bear, returning after their night's wanderings to their pet lying-up spots for the day. Having made this out, it is left to him to plan out his stalk and get his shot. There are few pleasures in the sportsman's life to compare with that he feels on a cold frosty morning as he sits or stands at dawn scanning the surrounding jungles with his glasses, feeling the cold barrels of his trusty rifle in his hands, and expecting every moment to see the grand antlers of a fine stag top a rise in the forest below him.

As an example of such a morning, I shall quote from "Man-eaters and other Denizens of the Indian Jungle," in which I have given a short account of a successful stalk in Mysore. "A local Nimrod, the owner of a murderous looking muzzle-loader, had for some time been offering to show me a good sambar, and, taking him at his word, I sallied out with him one morning before dawn to some steep hills, which he declared were a sure find for these deer. We got to the top of one of these hills just as the day was breaking, and, sitting down, I was able with the help of a powerful pair of binoculars to make out a herd of four sambar, a very long way off, making slowly as they fed in our direction. Due to the great distance they were from us, I was unable to tell whether the herd contained a stag or not, and was greatly amused to hear my companion state in a most positive manner, that he could make out a stag with huge horns. It was a pretty sight watching these animals feeding peacefully along in the open patches of the dark jungle, that stretched away for miles under us. As they came closer I was able to make out there were three full-grown does and a big fawn in the herd. Suddenly, a

doe gave the call of alarm, and the whole herd came trotting up the side of the hill and passed within fifty yards of where we were sitting; the fine stag of my companion's imagination being conspicuous by its absence.

"How many a poor doe has bitten the dust, either through the uncontrolled excitement of the 'Saheb,' or through his placing more reliance on his native shikari's eye-sight than on his own. I should put at more than ninety per cent. the native shikaris who would not hesitate to kill, or be instrumental in getting killed, any doe or fawn that gave them a chance. The ways of the white man in quest of shikar are an enigma to them. I remember the look of consternation on the face of a Kol shikari when I picked up and threw a stone at a hare he pointed out sitting in the hollow trunk of a fallen tree. After I had bowled over the little animal as it bounded away, quite a lengthy explanation was necessary that it was wrong to fire at a squatting hare; but for all that, I really think he had an idea that the man must be daft who would voluntarily take a running shot at an animal, when he could have blown it to pieces sitting at a couple of yards distance.

"The man with me seemed very disgusted at my allowing the sambar to go on their way unscathed, but suggested our trying the back of the hill; and as it was still quite early I thought there might be a chance, and accordingly climbed with him over the top, disturbing a little four-horned antelope on the way. Arriving at the summit, after a searching look around, my companion pointed to a large and dark object alongside a wild plum bush, and said it was a solitary sambar stag. My glasses proved him to be right this time, though the animal was a long way down below us. After a good survey of the ground we decided that we could not do better than wait where we were, as the sambar would most probably feed up to us before he selected a spot to lie up in on the hillside. Whilst watching him, we saw him take fright at something and come trotting in our direction, though only for a short distance, when he again stood still under a small tree. I was able to trace the cause of his fright to three men,

probably wood-cutters, whom I saw pottering about near the spot from where he had run. The animal was still quite three hundred yards from me and showed no signs of coming any further up the hill, and as I was rather diffident about chancing a long shot I decided to stalk him, and was on the point of starting, when he climbed up to the top of a bit of rising ground and quietly settled down in some long grass. As he had now most probably settled down for the day, nothing was to be gained by our sitting any longer on the hill, and, ordering the shikari to stay where he was and direct me by signalling with his arms, should the animal move off, I started on the difficult stalk.

" Though I could see the beast beautifully from where I started, I lost sight of him as soon as I had gone fifty yards down the hill. He had taken up a practically impregnable position on the top of the rise, and had a fine view of the flat ground all round him. With a deal of trouble I managed to get within eighty yards of the little mound on which he was lying, and could just catch sight of the tips of his antlers as he now and again moved them about in his endeavours to get rid of a large stinging fly that was worrying him. There was no getting a better view of him, and I was on the point of bringing him to his legs with a low whistle, when the persistent attentions of the fly made him stand up. I drew a bead on his shoulder, and was just about to press the trigger, when the animal began to rub his grand antlers against the bark of a small sapling. Thinking it possible he was in velvet, I put down my rifle and quietly took out my glasses, which I always carry attached to my belt, and had a careful look at his horns and found they were free of all signs of velvet. This sealed his fate, and the next moment my rifle rang out the noble animal's death knell. He was a fine specimen, but unfortunately I did not record the measurements of his horns. I only remember they were a massive pair.

" I had been so intent on the stalk that I had failed to see or hear a bear, which was grubbing about for roots or insects within a short distance of me; as I fired the animal got a great fright, and, grunting and growling, rushed off

towards the hill and made good his escape, followed by a bullet from my rifle, that harmlessly threw up the dust very near him. I made up my mind to see more of the old fellow next morning, as I felt pretty sure I would come across him returning at the same hour to some rocks, in which I had an idea he must have a cave."

The above, I am afraid, is only a very bald account of one of the many glorious mornings I have put in after sambar, and I feel it is quite eclipsed by the graphic and picturesque language in which "Hawkeye," an old and great sportsman of Southern India, depicts a similar hunt. The poetry of the sport is well brought out in his delightful descriptions. He writes thus:—"The hillside we now are on rapidly falls towards the river below, where it rushes over a precipice, forming a grand waterfall, beautiful to behold. The hillside is covered with a short, scrubby rough-leaved plant, about a foot and a half high. Bending low, we circle round the shoulder of the slope, beyond the wood. The quick eye of the stalker catches sight of a hind's ears, at the very spot he hoped for. The stag must be nigh.

"Down on all-fours we move carefully along, the stalker keenly watching the ears. A short distance gained, and the hind detects the movements of our heads. At the same moment the upper tines of the stag's antlers are in sight; he lies to the right of the hind, about 120 yards distant, hidden by an inequality of the ground. Be still, Oh beating heart! Be quiet, Oh throbbing pulse! Steady, Oh shaky hand, or all your toil is vain! Onward, yet only a few paces! Be not alarmed, Oh cautious hind! We care not for you. Crouching still lower, we gain ground; the head and neck of our noble quarry are in sight; the hind still gazes intensely. Presently she elongates her neck in a most marvellous manner. We still gain. On once more we move, when up starts the hind. We know that in another moment she will give the warning bell, and all will vanish. The time for action has arrived. We alter our position in a second, bring the deadly weapon to bear on the stag; quickly draw a steady bead, hugging the rifle with

all our might, and fire! The hinds flash across our vision like the figures in a magic lantern, and the stag lies weltering in his couch."

The flesh of the sambar does not appeal to the European palate, being too coarse in texture, but is greatly relished by most jungle tribes. The tongue and marrow bones are, however, not to be despised, and serving them up at table clears, in a measure, the conscience of the sportsman for destroying such handsome animals; whilst the antlers of a good stag are always appreciated as a fine trophy; the sight of them recalling memories of glorious and happy days spent in their pursuit. The skin, if sent to a good tannery, is turned out into a durable and pretty leather, from which such useful articles as cabin trunks, cartridge bags, etc., can be made. The sambar is altogether a fine beast, and it is a pity we have no Landseer to do him full justice.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE SWAMP DEER (*Rucervus Duvaucelli*).

Native Names, *Bara-singha* in Upper India.

Goen in Central India.

This handsome animal, the possessor of as many as twelve or more points to his horns, as his Hindustani name of *bara-singha* implies, is most abundant in the sub-montane tracts of the Himalayas from the northern districts of the United Provinces to Assam. It is also found, but not in such large numbers in certain districts of the Central Provinces, close to the Nerbudda and its tributaries; notably the districts of Mandla, Balaghat and Bilaspur. I have never heard of them south of the Central Provinces. They are unknown in Mysore. Though not nearly so plentiful as in the northern tracts, there are still some fine herds to be met with in the north-east corner of the Balaghat district, in the pretty but unhealthy jungles along the banks

of the Halone and Banjur rivers, which some years back were favourite shooting grounds with me.

The haunts of the bara-singha, like those of the sambar, are pet hunting grounds of the game-killing tiger, and, as the swamp deer cannot approach the sambar in general wariness, he falls a much easier prey to the larger carnivora. Many a fine pair of antlers are come on in the forests and testify to the owners having met a violent death under the paws of these ruthless hunters. I remember on one occasion, when beating for a tiger in the Balaghat district, the first animal to show up was a grand old solitary bara-singha, and the temptation to bag him was well nigh irresistible, but I withstood it and was amply repaid for doing so. Practically on his tracks, and less than five minutes after, out came the tiger, one of the largest I have ever bagged. He was a fine specimen, and giving me a good chance fell to a single shot from my Paradox.

Swamp deer are gregarious, and wherever plentiful are to be met with in large herds. They favour extensive patches of high grass in swampy tracts surrounded by heavy sal forests, in which they seek shelter when alarmed. It is a waste of time and energy to search for them in the heavy forest itself, as they will always be found in these stretches of grass, or just within the fringe of the forests bordering them. These animals are not wanderers to any great extent, and will stick to particular spots for years, even though shot at occasionally, so long as there is some water close at hand.

I remember one such spot of long grass in the Bilaspur district where I came on three magnificent stags together, without any does. All three were such perfect specimens, that it was some time before I could make up my mind which of the three to take, and even after the biggest, in my estimation, had fallen to my rifle, the sight of the two other pairs of superb antlers disappearing in the jungle made me wonder if I could not have done better. As long as I live I shall never forget the sight of that grand trio, standing, almost shoulder to shoulder, out in that quiet and pretty forest glade. I was only allowed one of these

stretch of grass.

The Goen, as he is called in the Central Provinces, is only a little smaller than the sambar, and is a long-bodied animal of a chestnut colour, and stands, I should say, about eleven hands in height. He is of the rucervine type, carrying a much finer trophy than *Rusa aristotelis*, as, though his horns may not attain the same length as that of the sambar, they are undoubtedly a far superior trophy; in good specimens there may be as many as eighteen points. The animal, just referred to, had seventeen points, and I have still got his head in my possession, and a photograph of it would have headed this chapter had the mask not all fallen to pieces from the ravages of insects at Mombassa, where it was stored whilst I was shooting in Africa.

The antlers are shed in March and April, and a shootable head is rarely come across before November in the Central Provinces, and probably a month later in North India. This animal, like the sambar, is given to wallowing in pools during the winter months. In case I have not made it quite clear, I take the opportunity, whilst on the subject, of mentioning that it is only the stags of both these kinds of deer that wallow. I have never observed, nor have I heard, that the does indulge in these rolls. If a well frequented wallowing ground is come on by the sportsman, it will be worth his while to stroll round to such a spot early in the morning, as there is a good chance of his coming across a stag pottering about in the cover round these pools.

In none of the cervidæ is there such a marked difference in size between the stags and the does, as in the case of the swamp deer. The does are insignificant looking things, and I should say no larger than those of the spotted deer; like the rest of the *Genus cervidæ* the hinds are hornless; the young are spotted.

It is difficult to connect the jarring and harsh call, sometimes heard in the forest at night, with such handsome beasts as the swamp deer; but yet it is a fact, that the stag's call of alarm on seeing a tiger is the most raucous sound imaginable. I remember one night, when I was sitting up over the carcass of a big buffalo killed by a tiger, that the bara-singha in the surrounding jungle were greatly alarmed and harassed by the beast, and throughout the night uttered these harsh calls; the tiger instead of coming out to his "kill" kept stalking the deer.

Camped, one October, in the Central Provinces jungle, I heard a number of Goen calling every night, and decided to have a beat one day, with the faint hope of coming on a stag in hard horn. The beat was well brought up, and no less than five Goen stags with many does passed by me; but alas! every one of them was in velvet. One beauty stood with a young sambar stag for fully ten minutes in front of me, displaying a magnificent spread of antlers, but, unfortunately like the rest, he was heavily in velvet.

These deer are said to be very abundant in Assam and to carry fine heads, but unfortunately I have not had an opportunity of seeing and comparing one of these heads with those I have obtained in the Central Provinces. I have seen many heads from the Nepal Terai, but have not yet found one to compare with the trophy I obtained in Bilaspur.

The quest of the bara-singha differs in many respects from that of the sambar, as the ground to be covered is totally different, and more closely resembles that to be met with when out spotted deer shooting. They are not fond of hills or broken ground, and must be sought in low-lying tracts, amidst rank high grass, and this often entails a deal of fatigue, as it is the worst of walking. As the shooting of these animals can only be done in the winter months, when this high grass in the early mornings is dripping with heavy dew, it is most disagreeable and dirty work plodding through it. Elephants, if available, would be invaluable, as from their backs a much better view of the animals in the grass could be obtained. On foot, the sportsman has to

be content, very often, with only putting up the game without a sight of them.

Only a very limited number of these animals are allowed to be shot in Government forests. This is just as well; were it not for this protection, due to their fondness for particular spots, they could easily be shot by anyone who made himself conversant with their haunts. This, indeed, would be a very great pity, as in my opinion the bara-singha is second to none of the grand animals that the Indian jungles have to offer, in the way of sport, to the European shikari.

I have used the name of bara-singha with reference to this deer, as it is the one most commonly used by native shikaris in the localities in which it is found. The name might just as appropriately be applied to the Kashmir stag (Hangal) which carries as many points, for, as I have remarked elsewhere, the word "Bara-singha" in the vernacular only conveys the meaning of "Twelve points."

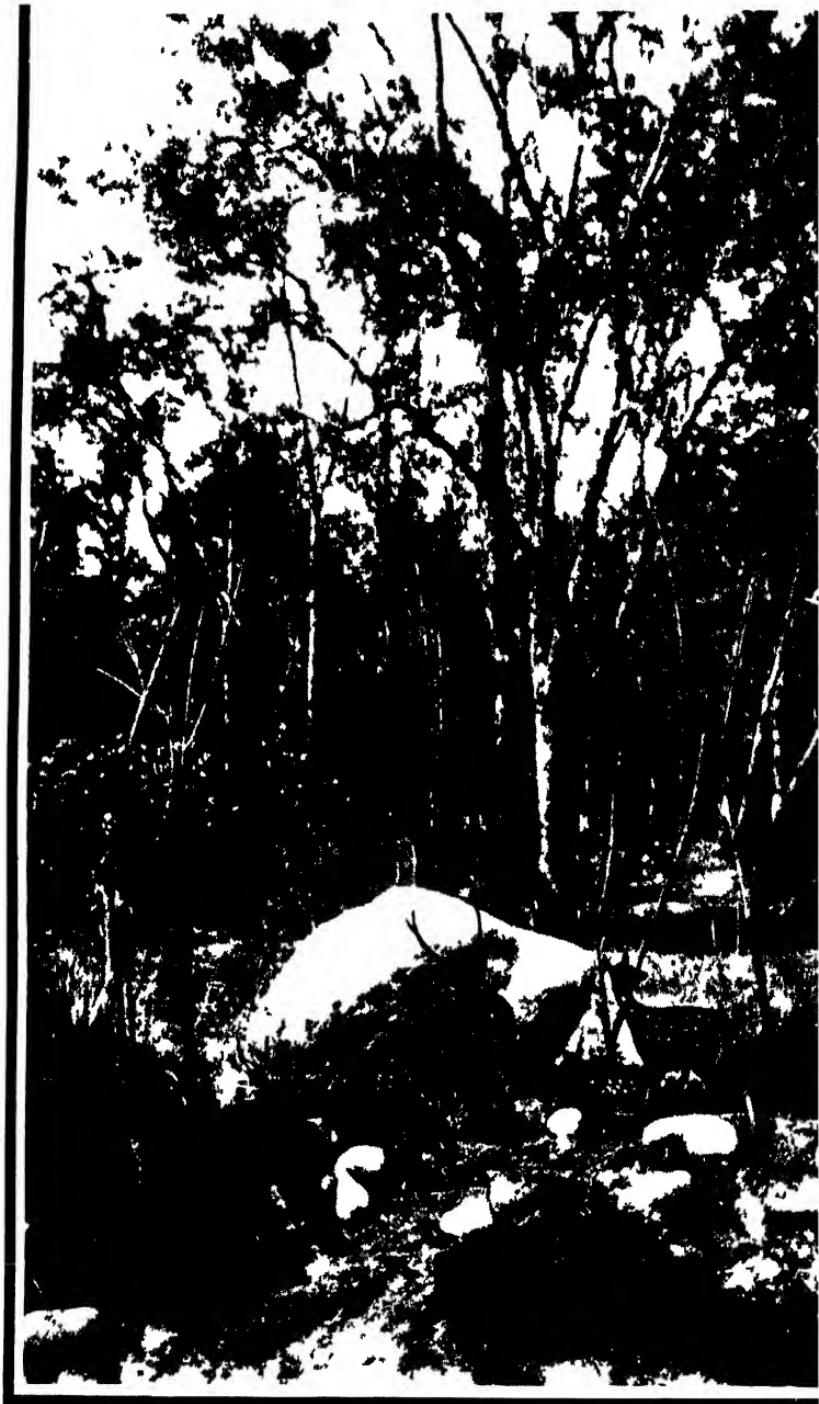


CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPOTTED DEER (*Axis Maculatus*).

Hindi, *Chital*, *Jhánk-chital* (male). Canarese, *Sarga*, *Para-sarga* (male).

With the exception of the Punjab, this deer is found throughout India, and also in Ceylon. Its horns are of the rusine type, with the usual three points in each, but abnormal small snags are often found on the brow antler; the beam is less massive than in the preceding two species mentioned, and is a great deal more bent, and altogether much paler and smoother than those of the sambar, besides having the trestine more developed at the expense of the royal. The general colour is a reddish fawn, spotted with white, and with a dark dorsal stripe; the throat, underparts and inside of limbs is white; the animal has both eye-pits and groin-pits.



A Forest Glade

The bend of the horns varies a great deal in individuals, and I cannot say this is characteristic of any particular localities. The prettiest antlers, however, in my experience, are those obtained in northern India, especially along the foot of the Sewaliks, whilst the largest generally come from Central India, where they are more massive and straighter in beam. A good head may be anything from 30 inches to 34 inches, but 36 inches and 37 inches are not uncommon.

Chital are gregarious animals, and are to be met with in large herds, which often contain half a dozen or more shootable heads. Larger herds are to be seen in Upper India than in the south, and I have heard it stated they are also bigger-bodied animals in the North, but, speaking for Mysore, I do not think this is the case.

A spotted deer stag is a remarkably fine and graceful animal, wherever he is found, and a herd of them, grazing in a forest glade, is the prettiest sight imaginable. A heavy toll from these herds is levied by the carnivora of the jungles they inhabit; besides which large numbers are shot indiscriminately as regards sex and size by native shikaris over water and in the cultivation round their villages, which chital are very fond of visiting at night.

In the Doon jungles, the villagers have a very clever but cruel method of killing chital. A field of inviting young crops is surrounded by a heavy thorn fence, and after noting the spots where the deer are accustomed to jump over this fencing, the men erect long stakes, with the upper ends well sharpened and pointed, just inside the fence, with the result that any deer bounding over it cannot escape getting impaled.

There are various other methods of destroying these raiders of crops, such as leaving only a narrow entrance to a fenced-in field, and running up and closing it with a net, immediately any animals have been seen to enter it. No mercy is shown to these entrapped animals, be they fawns, does or stags; all are slaughtered. It may well be asked how such things are allowed, but to all those who are conversant with India and with the poaching proclivities of

its jungle dwellers, this apparently incomprehensible breaking of the law needs no elucidation. Apathy and general indolence on the part of the subordinate guardians of the game laws are at the root of the evil.

Chital are fond of thin flat jungles with large grassy glades; only in a few localities have I found them on ground of a hilly nature. They are never to be met with at any great distance from water, for, as far as my own observations go, they drink at least twice in 24 hours. In tracts, which I regret to say are numerous, where they are potted at by the native shikaris at night, the animals confine their visits to water to the hours of day-light. As the hot weather approaches and the pools and tanks in the interior of the jungles dry up, the deer betake themselves long distances to other greener and better watered stretches, usually jungles that border rivers and perennial streams. Here their relentless destroyers—the carnivora—follow and also take up their quarters; and it is often difficult to understand how any chital can survive, having to share these restricted areas with animals that are for ever thirsting for their blood.

Spotted deer shooting on foot is, I think, one of the prettiest and pleasantest forms of sport any man could wish for. The deer afford very pretty, but I must also add very easy, shooting from the backs of elephants. In good chital ground, a blank day should be of very rare occurrence, if the glades of long grass in the forests are systematically gone through on elephants.

To enjoy chital shooting at its best, the sportsman should rise early, and with a single attendant skirt along the edges of the forest, with the object of picking up the animals as they return from their night's feeding. An hour after sunrise finds practically every chital under the shelter of the forest, but they potter about for yet awhile just within its borders, prior to entering thicker cover to settle down for the day. It requires some clever stalking to bag the best head out of a large herd, as the does will be found to be uncommonly wide awake and vigilant creatures. Small herds are very fond of settling down in the shade of the wide spreading banyan and burgad tree (*Ficus indica*),



Free reward of a quick right and left

nice open spots with little undergrowth. Chital are more fond of salt licks than even sambar, and visit them at all hours of the day.

The kind of ground that appeals to the spotted deer is light forest, interspersed with glades, amidst some of the prettiest scenery of the jungles. Though I have always been a keen follower of the spotted stag, and have shot more than I like to remember, I feel, to do full justice to the charming scenery and the sport itself, I must again borrow a few lines from the writings of that observant sportsman and writer, "Hawkeye," who thus describes a chase:—

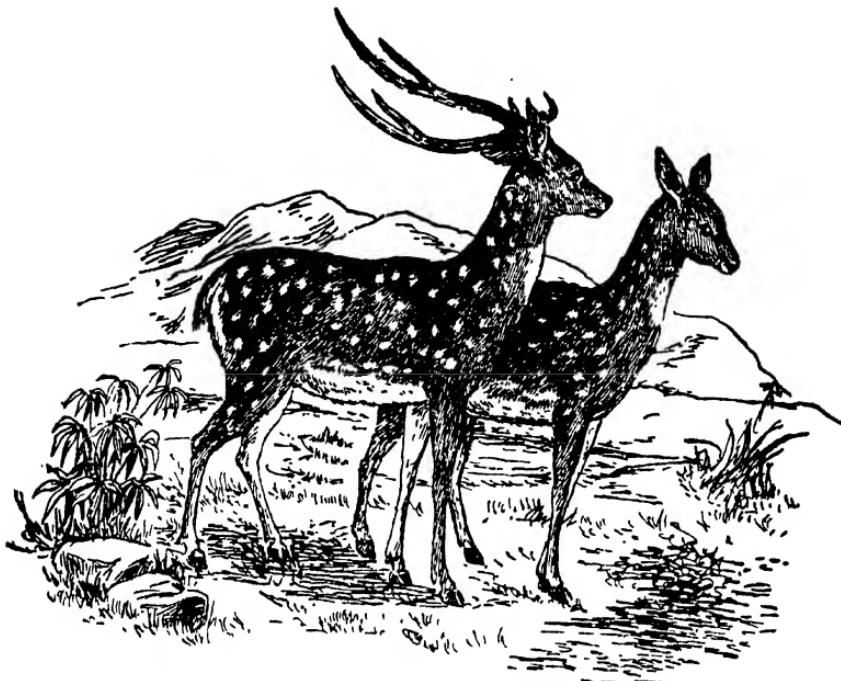
"Imagine a forest glade, the graceful bamboo arching overhead, forming a lovely vista, with here and there bright spots and deep shadows—the effect of the sun's rays struggling to penetrate the leafy roof of Nature's aisle. Deep in the solitude of the woods see now the dappled herd, and watch the handsome buck as he roams here and there in the midst of his harem, or, browsing amongst the bushes, exhibits his graceful antlers to the lurking foe, who by patient wood-craft has succeeded in approaching his unsuspecting victim; observe how proudly he holds himself, as some other buck of less pretensions dares to approach the ladies of the group; see how he advances, as on tiptoe, all the hair of his body standing on end, and with a thundering rush drives headlong away this bold intruder, and then comes swaggering back! But, hark—a twig has broken! Suddenly the buck wheels round, facing the quarter whence the sound proceeded. Look at him now, and say, is he not a quarry well worth the hunter's notice?"

"With head erect, antlers thrown back, his white throat exposed, his tail raised, his whole body gathered together, prepared to bound away into the deep forest in the twinkling of an eye, he stands a splendid specimen of the cervine tribe. We will not kill him; we look and admire! A doe suddenly gives that imperceptible signal to which I have formerly alluded, and the next moment the whole herd has dashed through the bamboo alleys, vanishing from sight—a dappled hide now and again gleaming in the sunlight as its owner scampers away to more distant haunts."

When harassed by carnivora, chital give out a short shrill call of alarm and warning. This is one of the most pleasant of sounds to greet the sportsman's ear on his arrival at a new shooting ground, as it tells him that, besides deer, there is every chance of his picking up a tiger or panther. The solitary old stags, that seem never to leave the heavy forests, at different intervals during the night give forth a kind of roar or challenge that carries a very great distance.

I have come on the bodies of many spotted deer killed by tigers and panthers, and on one occasion in the Doon jungles came on six that had been struck down and killed by a pair of tigers; all the bodies were lying within the space of a small area. Besides the felines, the spotted deer have deadly persecutors in the packs of wild dogs that periodically turn up to scour the jungles.

The majority of horns are shed about September, and are not ready before the end of February. I once had a peculiar experience with a fine stag. He was pointed out to me by my shikari companion some way down a low grass-covered hill, on which I happened to be sitting, enjoying a smoke. I was only able to make out his antlers and a part of his face, and firing with an accurate rifle at a spot, where I thought his head should be, I saw him collapse at the shot. I was most disgusted, however, to find, on getting up to the animal, that my shot had got him in the forehead, and that the concussion had caused both the horns to fall off. They were on the point of being shed, and my shot had only hastened the operation.



CHAPTER XVIII.

ADONIS OF THE JUNGLE.

Jhánk, the stag—Adonis of the Indian Forest—gave his grand antlers a shake and with the points gently rubbed the side of his handsome spotted coat, where a stinging fly had just alighted. “Whatever were such pests made for?” he said aloud, whilst he proudly looked round at the large herd of graceful spotted deer that stood and lay around him. He was their acknowledged lord and master, and though there were some young and troublesome stags in the herd, he knew the gentle and beautiful does were the pick of the jungle herds. He had fought hard for his present position as Lord of the Herd, and meant to retain it so long as pluck and arrogance held out against the impetuous and ever-increasing strength of youth, here represented by the youngsters longing to oust him from his envied position.

It was late in the afternoon of a hot day in the early summer, and the sun had just disappeared over the tops of the towering and straight stemmed trees that encircled the

pretty little grass-covered glade in which the deer had peacefully passed the burning hours of midday—the hours when the forest and all its inhabitants slept—when Cheetul, the big and wise doe of the party, got to her feet. After a long and comforting stretch of her pretty dappled form and delicately formed limbs, she started to nibble at the blades of tender green grass at her feet, every now and again flicking her tail and ears to drive off the annoying little flies and gnats that settled on her. The members of the herd, that were not already on their feet, now also arose and looked towards and waited for Jhánk to arise.

He alone was still resting on his soft couch, behind a tuft of high and coarse grass. The fawns, of which there were a few in the party, romped and skipped around their mothers, whilst a couple of young buck began a friendly trial of strength, shoving and pushing against each other with their foreheads and clashing their antlers; whilst yet another youngster, who gave promise of a glorious pair of antlers in a couple of seasons, started a game of his own by chasing one of Jhánk's favourite young does round and round the glade.

Jhánk was jealous, and could not stand this. He rose to his feet now and, with nose held high in the air and horns thrown back and resting on his shoulders, walked slowly and majestically towards the edge of the clearing to intercept the giddy pair as they came round again. The young stag saw Jhánk in time and, desisting from the chase, swerved off to the shelter of the trees, with the lord of the herd after him. Adonis followed only a few yards, and then with a stiff and proud air strode back to the watching herd.

Cheetul thought it was time to be moving on, and giving the lead made slowly in the direction of the little stream that formed the boundary of the immense forest. She knew well tender young grass was sprouting along its banks after being burnt down a month before by the cowherds who grazed their cattle there in the day-time. The herd fed slowly as they went, Cheetul always at its head and Jhánk and the smaller stags bringing up the rear.

There were many little clearings on the way, where a few mouthfuls of sweet grass could be relied on; there was also a certain amount of fallen fruit to be picked up under the trees, and the big salt lick of the jungle lay on the road.

It was not surprising therefore that it was nearly dusk by the time they approached the banks of the stream.

The herd stood awhile within the fringe of the jungle and within sight of the inviting green banks. Cheetul stamped her forefoot in an impatient and puzzled manner as her eyes caught a glimpse of a low dark shape crouching amongst some tall reeds in the river bed. "That looks like the cunning and cruel Chita, the Panther, waiting to ambush us," she said to the doe at her side. Both stared long and hard, when suddenly a shrill call of "Pheanw, Pheanw" was heard, and Gedur, the Jackal, was seen trotting towards them.

"What is the matter?" Jhánk questioned, as Gedur was passing by the herd.

"Turn and go back to the jungle, Adonis. The wicked Chita is patrolling the stream this evening, on the look out for such thirsty people as you."

"Thank you for your warning." Jhánk then gave out his own shrill warning call "Tiow," when the whole herd turned and galloped back into the forest, Jhánk and the young stags gathering in the stragglers as they went along.

Cheetul now made for a small pool a mile further on, which she knew must yet hold some water. They were thirsty and must have a drink before settling down to their feeding for the night. On the way, and after they had settled down again to their usual slow and cautious mode of progress, they came on Maha, the doe sambar, and inquired of her if there were any signs of Bagh, the big striped King of the Jungles. Cheetul knew that very little that went on in the forest escaped the quick eye or ear of Maha, the vigilant.

"No," said Maha. "Bagh is not in this block of forest to-night. If he were I am sure my sensitive nose would have told me so. He has probably gone over the hill to the other side of the jungle on the look out for any

unlucky buffalo or cow that the lazy cowherds of Badripore may have left behind, when taking their herds home. You may drink safely at the pool to-night."

In spite of this assurance, Cheetul led her herd, for whose safety she held herself responsible, with great caution to the edge of the clearing in which the pool lay, and showed very clearly that she disapproved of any of them trotting out and dipping their soft muzzles in the cool and refreshing liquid till she had thoroughly scrutinized every bush and dark spot on its banks. The thirsty does and fawns followed in a body, close on her heels, as she eventually walked out to the water, but the stags lagged behind a moment or two longer before leaving Jhánk quietly standing alone in the shadow of a large tree. He was a cute old fellow in his way, and thoroughly endorsed the rule, recognized throughout the forest, that everyone looked after himself only. It was only right he thought that the members of his harem and the younger stags of the herd should bear the brunt of any danger that came their way. So he hung back for yet awhile, and only when he saw that the coast was clear did he walk out and dip his own muzzle into the cool water of the pool, and have a glorious drink.

That danger and sudden death often lurked in the vicinity of the life-giving fluid, the older members of the herd knew too well; so they cut short their stay at the pool and trooped back into the dark forest. It was only a fortnight back, during the moonlight nights, that the flash of a gun from a cleverly concealed ambush at the edge of that very pool had been followed by the fall of one of their number. Ramdin, the village shikari, had sent his full charge of slugs true that night.

Cheetul, taking up the lead again, took the herd on to the thin jungles and open ground around the cultivation of Badripore, where it spent the night feeding peacefully. Dawn saw it back again, safe, in the forest, where selecting an inviting glade, after an hour or so of further feeding the deer settled down to pass the day till the setting sun and Cheetul told them it was time to be again on the move.

Weeks and months slipped by. The herd lived its free and unfettered life, wandering at will through the glorious forest that was its home. It was not altogether an uneventful existence, for many exciting incidents were experienced, some pleasant and others the reverse. Chita and Bagh had taken their toll, in spite of the wariness and vigilance of Cheetul, and Ramdin had been busy with his old muzzle-loader during the moonlight nights. The rains had come and gone, and the herd which had scattered about during the wet weather had come together and returned to their old haunts.

Jhánk, the magnificent, now no longer boasted a pair of grand antlers, for these had been shed, and a new pair was already springing up in their place. If only he could keep from damaging the soft velvet-covered pair, he knew that by the end of the cold weather they would have grown into beauties, probably an inch or two longer than those of last season. It was only his bigger body and thicker neck that now distinguished him from the insignificant does of the herd, and it was no longer possible for him to assume the haughty and proud bearing we noticed in the hot weather months. He was obliged to put up with a deal of impudent liberty from the youngsters, as he dared not use his soft horns to keep them in order. Jhánk was now simply one of the common ruck; but he knew full well this state of things would only be for a few more months.

Hanuman, the big monkey, often chaffed him during those days, when he and the herd were picking up the bitter aonlas* that Hanuman's troop had shaken down from the tree. So as not to further glory in Jhánk's fall from his proud position we shall leave him alone for the winter months, and only interest ourselves in him from the time he emerged transformed into the proud and handsome Jhánk we knew of old.

It is in the pleasant and temperate month of February that we see him again, his head surmounted by a magnificent pair of antlers, well rubbed and burnished on the young

* The fruit of the *Phyllanthus emblica*.

sal* saplings—a pair that the most particular and exacting of sportsmen would not be ashamed to have on their walls. The rank vegetation of the rains had by now died down, and the undergrowth of the forest was thin enough to allow of the cunning Chita being easily detected when he tried to stalk them. The wheat and gram crops of Badripore were still young enough to allow of a mouthful or two in those fields that were not watched over and guarded by their owners.

Above all it was the season for love throughout the jungle, and what did it matter if the shooting of his kind had just opened. His jungles were seldom visited by European sportsmen, who were after all the only ones who could shoot far and straight. He lived his free and happy life, and gloried in the battles he had to fight to retain his position of Lord of the Herd. The next best stag had given him a hard time of it though, when he had the temerity on one occasion to dispute his leadership. Only his greater experience had brought him victorious out of that great tussle. That stag he took care to hunt clean out of the herd, and he now roamed solitary and morose, while Jhánk lorded it as before.

He was fated, however, not to be left in undisturbed possession of the herd for much longer, as he met his match less than a week after his last grim struggle. One morning he proceeded to punish a strong young stag, that he saw was on too friendly terms with the ladies of the herd. This youngster engaged him in battle at once, and soon realized that the great Jhánk was not the invincible animal he had hitherto considered him. He found Jhánk gave ground as he pushed against his grizzled forehead, and following up the advantage he was pleased to see that he quite held his own against the Lord of the Herd. A few more wild but strong prods with his horns, and the younger stag recognized the fact that Jhánk was in distress and was breathing loudly. A strong hard push, and the old stag was

* The *Shorea robusta*.

over on the ground; a further butt or two, and the grand old fellow was up and retreating to the jungle.

Jhánk had been fairly beaten, and left his conqueror to take over the herd, whilst he retreated to the thickest coverts to brood over the thrashing he had received. Youth had prevailed, though Jhánk was inclined to put his defeat down to stiffness and the hurts he had received in his former fierce battle.

He was resting one morning and brooding over his hard lot, when little Bakra, the Muntjac, was seen scuttling towards him, with his little tail high in the air, and a look of great fear in his eyes.

The old stag jumped to his feet and inquired of the little animal, as it was bounding past, what it was that had so frightened him.

"Run for your life, Adonis," the little animal shouted back. "Sona, the merciless Wild Dog, and his pack are in the forest. I heard them whimpering as they came on my tracks. They will be here in a moment. Fly, Fly. I hear them now."

As Bakra repeated his hoarse cry of "Boh" and disappeared, Jhánk also turned to fly, for he caught a glimpse of the red-coloured Sona emerging from the forest in quest of his escaping prey. He had lost a few precious seconds before he got into his stride, and knew Sona had seen him and would press him hard in preference to the little Bakra, the pack had hitherto been following. A few magnificent bounds, and the old stag had got to some friendly cover. He did not halt for a second, but turning round and jinking continued his flight till the tremulous whimper of his pursuers was no longer to be heard. Halting for a few seconds, with flanks heaving and eyes dilated with fear, he listened intently, and then continued his flight as he knew he had not yet been able to shake off the fierce hunters of the jungle.

He bounded along through some heavy tree jungle, taking all obstacles in his path with flying leaps, till he came on a broad and dry river bed. He lost ground here, as he sank into the soft sand, and recognizing that the pursuing

pack, lighter of build, were gaining on him, plunged into the long heavy grass and low scrub that covered a large clearing and tore along through it, reckless of the thorns that here and there lacerated his pretty spotted sides. The foam was already flecking his wide open mouth, and signs of failing strength were beginning to make him desperate with despair. Trees and bushes seemed to fly past as he ran, but presently he found his pace was slackening, and only a weary canter was all he was capable of.

Hanuman and his troop were busy on the tree tops, and caught sight of poor Adonis lumbering along, the magnificent head drooping through weariness, and the red tongue hanging out on the side of his open mouth, from which his breath was coming in long and painful gasps.

Hanuman soon caught sight of Sona and his pack, running strong and with confidence in their long swinging stride, and knew poor Adonis' hours were numbered. As the hunted animal passed under their tree he shouted out, " Make for the stream Adonis, there is a deep pool in which you can stand at bay, and drive off the cursed Sona and his pack."

Adonis passed on, whilst the troop of monkeys did its best to delay the merciless wild dogs. They cursed and swore at the common enemy, but to no purpose, as Sona would not waste time on them and led his pack on, knowing the quarry was nearly theirs. The old stag could now hardly call up more than a tired trot, and as he wearily climbed up some rising ground he met Gedur the Jackal, who taking in the situation at a glance, called out to him, " Your old herd is lying up on the other side of this mound. Reach them, and you will be saved."

Adonis heard, and with a last spurt he was in the midst of his old companions. Cheetul and the others saw him come, but before they could put him any questions Sona and his pack topped the rising ground and was in the midst of the herd.

Jhánk had mixed up with the others as they scattered, and he ran with a few does and then suddenly ducked and squatted behind a thick bush, from where he listened to the

music of the pack, as it went past in full chase of the stag, that had so lately vanquished him. His last ounce of strength had been exhausted, and he lay with his tired head stretched out in front of him, and the breath coming in long-drawn sobs from his labouring lungs. He felt he was saved; Sona had mistaken the big and fresh stag for him, and he knew he would be led a long chase.

A couple of hours later, the tired animal rose to his feet, and slowly made his way to a little jungle pool into which he plunged, and cooled and refreshed his tired flesh and muscles. He quietly sauntered back into the forest, and lay up for the rest of the day, during which time a great longing to be with his kind came on him. Solitude and brooding he felt had done him no good, and he longed to be with Cheetul and the others. So, when night fell over that vast silent forest, there could be heard the hoarse harsh bellow of a grand old solitary stag, giving out its challenge to the world, and inviting the hinds of his species to gather round him.

Cheetul heard, and from the dark clump of trees, where with some others she was discussing the dreadful affliction that had now come on them with the visit of Sona to their jungles, she slowly made in the direction of the low hill from which Jhánk was roaring out his challenge every now and again. She got to the side of her old lord and master and contentedly grazed about till he would condescend to notice her.

“Well, Cheetul, where are the others?” he asked at length.

“They have all scattered, and the herd is broken up and waiting for a leader to get them together,” she replied. “Sona and his cruel pack ran down and destroyed him, who once drove you from us. This jungle is no longer safe, and we are all moving on to the other side of the hill till Sona and his bloodthirsty pack go away.”

Jhánk took over the remnants of the herd, and made with them for safer and less disturbed jungles, but drifted back again to his old haunts when he learned that Sona had cleared out.

One evening, as the herd was peacefully and unsuspectingly feeding in the old glade, where we first made its acquaintance, it was watched closely by a couple of human figures concealed behind a large clump of bamboos.

"What a grand head that old stag carries," said Tommy Wilde to a pretty young girl crouching beside him.

"Yes, he is a beautiful creature indeed," replied his companion—the bride he had just brought out on his return from leave, and who was now being given her first glimpse of the animal life of the jungles.

"Watch that big doe. She is getting suspicious," he added, as he saw Cheetul turn and look hard towards them, stamping her forefoot impatiently. "I must fire quickly, or they will be off."

Listing his rifle and, taking a quick and sure aim, he pressed the trigger. Jhánk sank down in his tracks, and a pair of grand antlers tossed about wildly on the ground, whilst the rest of the herd disappeared in the forest. Tommy Wilde and his companion walked up and stood over the fallen Jhánk, he to admire his trophy and she to gaze pitifully at the beautiful beast lying at their feet.

"Oh! Tom, what have you done? How could you do it?" she burst out at length. "Look at those eyes. It is all so terribly sad."

Jhánk lay still, and his eyes seem to look reproachfully into those of his slayers, and then, as the warm red blood trickled from his dilated nostrils and stained his lips, a few convulsive twitches ran through his shapely limbs, and the shadow of death slowly passed over and glazed his beautiful soft eyes.

"Nonsense. Come away if the sight distresses you. He was certainly a fine beast to destroy, but after all his end was more merciful than it would have been under the paws of the big and merciless carnivora that roam these jungles, or at the hands of some Indian shikari. The life of the jungle is one long struggle for existence, the stronger ever preying on the weaker; very few if any escape a violent death. Some day I expect you will see the glint of rage in a tiger's eyes as he breathes his last. He has as

much right to live as the most beautiful stag, and yet no expression of pity or regret is ever heard when he bites the dust. Each follows his own destiny. Let us get to the tents and send men to fetch him in."

Jhánk had lived his life, and even after death his memory lingered long in the mind of a good sportsman as he glanced over his fine collection of trophies, amongst which Jhánk's glorious antlers had been given a prominent place.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOG DEER (*Axis Porcinus*).

Hindi, *Para, Sugaria*.

This animal is another with the rusine type of antlers; which look like miniature models of those of the sambar, and which are shed about the same time. The horns are seldom handsome, having a straight beam with ugly set-on brow and trestines. Poor horns are the rule, and a good pair, which should attain 18 inches in length, is quite the exception.

The prevailing colour is a dark brown, with the under-parts and inner sides of limbs and tail white; the young are spotted, and retain their spots till about half-grown. I have observed that a few adults, especially in the hot weather, are also faintly spotted. The Para is altogether a smaller animal than the spotted deer, and lacks greatly in the beauty and gracefulness connected with *Axis maculatus*. When in flight the head is held low, and the general gait is comparatively slow and awkward; so much so that they can be easily run down with dogs.

Hog deer are to be found chiefly in Upper India, Assam and Burmah, and sparingly in Ceylon. Personally,

I have never come across any south of the Ganges except in the Doon, but think it very probable that there may be a few in Central India as asserted by some writers; there is a deal of forest land suitable to its existence in the Central Provinces. They are not partial to heavy tree jungle, but keep to extensive grass stretches along its borders, affording excellent shooting from the backs of elephants, as they dodge about in the long grass when put up at close range.

Para are not gregarious, and will be come across either alone or in pairs, even though the jungle may be full of them. My acquaintance with this deer is confined to the Doon jungles and a few tracts along the north banks of the Ganges river in the northern districts of the United Provinces, where they are occasionally to be found in extensive and low-lying patches of *jhao* jungle.

The hog deer is one of the first of the jungle inhabitants to be on the move in the evenings, and I have had some good sport in stalking them on the confines of heavy tree jungles, as they grazed about in open stretches, feeding on the young grass that sprouts profusely after the long dry grass has been burnt down in December and January.

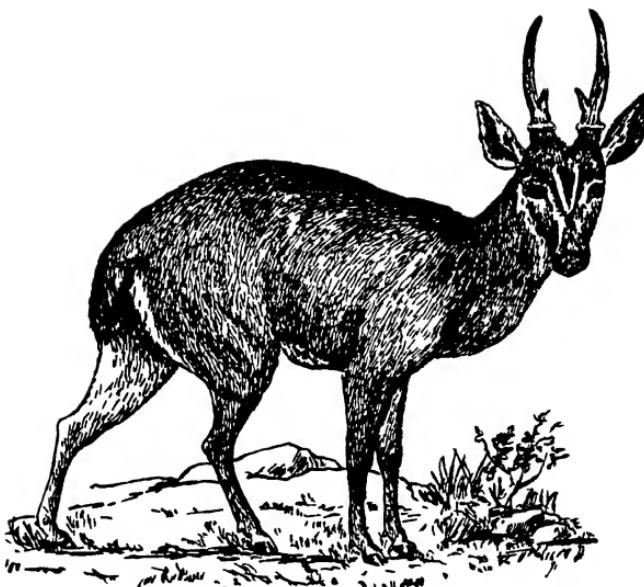
The flesh is fairly good, and is very acceptable for the table at many of the inhospitable spots in the jungle at which sportsmen sometimes find themselves. I do not know if other men have noticed it, but I have found frequently, in the case of these animals shot by me, there is a large kind of worm or maggot to be found embedded along the vertebrae of the spinal column under the skin.

The note of alarm produced by these deer is very like that of the spotted deer, only with more of a hollow and mellow whistle in it, and is quite a pretty sound at night. The hog deer, like the bara-singha, are averse to changing their feeding grounds unless greatly harassed, and should a stag be missed by the sportsman, there is every chance of his coming on the same animal next day in identically the same spot.

The early mornings and evenings are the best time for finding these deer on the feed in the open, as they lie very close during the remainder of the day in high patches of

grass. They, like the chital, are a common prey of the carnivora.

Sterndale puts it on record that this species has interbred with the spotted deer, and that the hybrid progeny has survived.



CHAPTER XX.

THE BARKING DEER (*Cervulus Aureus*).

Hindi, *Kakur, Jangli-bakra, Berki, Gutri.*

Canarese, *Kard-kurhi.*

The kakur or rib-faced deer, also one of the jungle cervidæ, now only remains to be dealt with in this work. There is certainly the little mouse deer left, a ruminant standing 10 to 12 inches in height, but as he is classed as a deerlet by naturalists I shall place him after the gazelle and give him a few lines to himself.

The Muntjac—another name by which the barking deer is known—is found throughout India in all thickly wooded hilly tracts, as well as in Burmah, Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula, extending even to Java and Borneo. They are very plentiful in the Himalayas, and I have shot them up to an elevation of 8,000 feet above sea-level, from where they seem to give place to the musk deer. They are also very common in the Nilgiri Hills and Southern India.

The horns of the rib-faced deer are of a simple bifurcated type, consisting of the beam and a single brow antler, sprouting from a high pedacle. The tips of the horns in many specimens are hooked inwards; a good pair

of horns measure, excluding the pedacle, 5 inches to 6 inches in length; the shedding takes place about the same time as that of the sambar. In the upper jaw there is a pair of tushes, quite an inch in length, with which the animal can inflict very nasty wounds on any incautious man or dog handling them when wounded.

The size of the animal differs greatly in different localities; those of Southern India are, I think, on the small side; certainly their faces appear to be longer and thinner than in specimens from the north. Those from Java and Sumatra are, on the other hand, asserted to be much bigger animals, but I must admit I have seen no specimens from those parts.

The average animal of Northern and Central India of which I have shot many, stands about 28 inches in height; is of a reddish-chestnut in colour with a lighter tint under the throat, chin and tail, and dark brown on the legs from the knees, and hocks downwards. There is a peculiar crease down the centre of the face, and the ridges or ribs on either side are of a dark chocolate brown, sparsely covered with hair; the pedacles of the horns are quite two inches in length and also covered with long dark hair. The does, like the rest of the cervidæ, are hornless, but have coarse twisted tufts of dark hair, forming little knobs where the horns start in the males.

The note of alarm of these deer consists of a short hoarse bark, from which they have got their name of "Barking deer." The animals, at the sight of a panther will often keep up this hoarse bark for half an hour at a time. On one occasion in the Himalayas my attention was drawn to two black bears, grubbing about a long way off on the opposite hillside, by the constant and continuous barking of one of these deer, that could also see them. Dusk was approaching, and as the getting to the bears necessitated a very long detour and stiff climb, I was obliged to leave them alone, and content myself with watching them through my glasses.

The barking deer is a shy and retiring animal that lives in thick cover, from which he only emerges late in the

evenings to feed in the open. They are usually found alone or in pairs, and in the Himalayas are generally to be seen on grassy slopes, near which there are thickly wooded ravines or valleys. I have enjoyed some really fine rifle practice at long range by sitting on a hillside and watching any likely slopes opposite me, and have generally got in my shot at a buck, late in the afternoon, as he sneaked out for a feed. I have also shot a good few in the Central Provinces, but have only come on them by chance there.

I have noticed, when disturbed, kakur usually make uphill, whilst gooral, who are often found on the same ground in the Himalayas, rush downhill on being fired at.

The flesh of the barking deer is really excellent. The animals, when taken young, get very tame, and make pretty and interesting pets.



CHAPTER XXI.

THE FOUR-HORNED ANTELOPE (*Tetraceros quadricornis*).

This little animal, often erroneously spoken of as the four-horned deer, is of the antelope species with bony cores inside the horns. Its habitat may briefly be described as the whole of India, both in heavy tree jungle and in scrub.

I have found it very plentiful on the plateaux of Bundelkhund and Central India, and have shot a few in the Central Provinces and in Mysore. They are fairly abundant in the Doon jungles.

The posterior horns may run up to four inches in length, and are set far back on the frontal bone, while the small anterior ones are set a couple of inches in front of them, and never exceed an inch and a-half in length; often they are merely knobs or callosities. The predominant colour of the body is brown; inside the limbs and on the underparts it is whitish; the height is about 26 inches; the hind-quarters are a shade higher than the fore.

Like the barking deer, these animals are found singly or in pairs—never in herds. Whilst beating for bear, one

day on the Kymores, no less than six four-horned passed by me. This is, however, very uncommon, and I expect they represented almost as many groups of animals lying separately in the large area of ground covered by the beat.

These little antelopes seem to be equally at home in dense forest as in sparsely bush-covered ground. They lie very close, and often are only put up when nearly trod on. They carry the head very low as they scuttle away, rather than run, in a jerky manner, taking care to put a bush as quickly as possible between themselves and you. Pretty straight shooting with the rifle is required to bowl them over as they dodge about amongst the bushes.

To secure a really good head with all four horns well developed is rather a rare occurrence, and in my experience such heads are more likely to be come on in Bundelkhund and Bagheilkhund than elsewhere. The flesh is sometimes very nasty, being impregnated with the juices of the acid and astringent wild berries and fruit it is so fond of. The wild plum and a berry, known as the *Karouna*, are great favourites with the animal.

The call of the four-horned, only heard when the animal is frightened, is a low, hollow and mellow sound, almost a whistle, and not very unlike that of the hog deer, but shorter and not half so loud.

Panther account for a fair number of these jungle-inhabiting little antelopes.



CHAPTER XXII.

THE BLUE BULL (*Pertax Tragocamelus*).

Hindi, *Nilgai, Rojah, Robi.*

Canarese, *Moravi.*

The blue bull is altogether a disappointing animal, both from the sporting point of view and the trophy he carries. He is the largest of the antelope species in India, if not in the world. The only other antelope that may rival it in size is the African Eland; but unfortunately I never took any measurements of the elands I shot in East Africa.

The blue bull is a clumsy looking beast with his high withers and low croup, and compares very unfavourably with the eland, which is a handsome animal, carrying a fine head, and having an imposing looking dewlap. The eland reminds one very much of the magnificent commissariat bullocks to be seen in India, but are active and alert animals whose flesh is far superior in flavour to the best of beef obtainable in that country.

To give a short description of the nilgai:—The bull stands from 13 to 14 hands at the withers, and in old specimens is of a slaty blue or iron grey colour, with a white throat and two white spots on the cheek; he has a

very massive neck with a short black mane along the top as far as the withers, and a tuft of long and coarse black hair under the white patch of his throat. He is altogether a peculiarly shaped animal, having a long thin fiddle head, and sloping away appreciably from the withers to the croup, due to his hind legs being shorter than the front. His horns are smooth and black, curving forward, and are about 8 inches in length. The horns of the old males are sharp pointed, and from my own observations I think they decrease slightly in length as the animals age and they polish up and get pointed, as I have generally found younger animals carry longer and blunter horns. The cows are much smaller and are sober coloured light brown animals without any horns, and have a dark dorsal stripe the full length of their bodies.

Blue bulls are most plentiful in the northern provinces of India, where they inhabit scrub and thinly wooded jungles, and even take up their quarters in extensive patches of sugar-cane and *arhur*. They are to be found in fair numbers in the Central Provinces, and inhabit the outskirts of the heavy jungles, being wilder and affording better sport than in the north. I do not think they are to be met with to the south, in Mysore.

The Hindus in most parts of the country will not eat the flesh of this animal, as they persist in looking upon it as a species of the sacred cow. Mussalmans, on the other hand, are very fond of the flesh and are constantly shooting them, where their Hindu brethren do not prevent them. The marrow bones and tongue, and occasionally a steak from the undercut of a young animal are about all that the European sportsman allows himself. The flesh, like that of the four-horned antelope, is sometime found to be impregnated with the juices of the sour and astringent fruits the animal eats, notably that of the wild plum.

Nilgais are gregarious, and go about in small herds, feeding from the late afternoon, throughout the night, up to a couple of hours after sunrise. The poppy fields of the United Provinces and Bihar are greatly destroyed by these animals, who seem to suffer no ill effects after devouring

large quantities of the opium-yielding capsules. They are great raiders of crops, and wax fat over the large stretches of green gram and young wheat of northern India.

On the whole, the nilgai is a clumsy and stupid animal, and not worth the serious attention of the sportsman. In some parts they are not included amongst the game animals to whom protection is extended by the Game Laws, and may be shot promiscuously. Often, when pestered by villagers in the United Provinces to shoot them a few nilgais that were damaging their crops, I have sallied out on an elephant, and, getting men to beat out the sugar-cane, have shot as many as four bulls of a morning. I am glad to say that none of the flesh was wasted, as the population of these villages is dense, and there was no satisfying the craving for meat exhibited by those castes who had no scruples about eating blue bull flesh.

There is certainly some justification for Hindus refusing to eat the flesh or even touching the dead animal, as the Hindustani name is made up of the words *nil*—blue and *gai*—cow, and no amount of talk and argument will make the majority of these men look upon the beast as anything except a cow of some kind or other.

Nilgai are very hardy animals and take a lot of lead to bring down, and I remember one big beast going off with three spherical 12-bore bullets for fully a mile from where I had wounded him, and passing by my camp, where he was bayed by my dogs, till I arrived on the scene and shot him. On another occasion I was strolling with the dogs late in the evening along the bank of a small river in some light jungle when they put up a big fellow, who stood at bay in the centre of the stream in some three feet of water. He gave such a good account of himself and knocked the dogs about so much, as they swam around trying to hang on to him, that I was obliged to be very quick and shoot him. The commotion in the water attracted a crocodile, who was decidedly mischievously inclined towards the dogs, so I had to brain him with a bullet between his beady eyes. Both he and the bull were easily retrieved by my camp followers, whom I sent to the spot.

It is only in a few parts of the country that nilgai inhabit jungles that hold tiger, but where they do so they form an appreciable addition to that animal's fare. In the heavy jungles of the Saharanpur district, along the foot of the Sewaliks, I have twice come on the bodies of nilgai, killed by tigers; and at night have frequently heard the hoarse call of these animals, denoting a tiger on the prowl.

When taken young the nilgai can be tamed, but from my own experience of these tamed animals I think they are far from nice pets, as they are decidedly dangerous, and generally apt to charge people who approach them. I knew of a blue bull in the Jubbulpore district that was owned by a *dhoby* (washerman), and who used to carry about bundles of clothes on his back for his master, to and from the washing *ghats*. Though I have not seen it myself, I can fully believe stories I have been told of these animals being broken into and used in ordinary bullock carts.

In some parts of Upper India, where the going is good, the nilgai is occasionally ridden down and speared. To do this requires a sound and good horse, as unless the nilgai is pressed hard from the start he will gallop for ever and test the endurance of the best stayer to the utmost.

The skin around the neck of an old bull is quite an inch in thickness, and the process of *halalling*, required by their Koran (Bible) of all good Mohamedans before meat can be considered clean for consumption, is a painful and nauseating operation, unless the knife with which it is performed has a very sharp edge to it. I have more than once cuffed the ears of a servant for starting out with a hopelessly blunt knife after blue bull.

The hide, if sent to a good tannery, is turned out into capital leather for making suit cases, etc. I have a large cabin trunk, made out of a couple of these hides, that, in spite of the wear and tear it has been subjected to, is as strong as ever it was when newly built some seven years ago.



CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BLACK BUCK (*Antelope Bezoartica*).

Hindi, *Hiran, Kala-hiran, Mirigg.* Canarese, *Sigri.*

Black buck are the commonest, and at the same time most graceful of the antelope of the country. These animals are lovers of flat and open country, and would not figure in the list of the carnivora's prey, but for the fact that in many parts, south of the Jumna River, they inhabit the fringes of jungles, and fall a prey to panther and chita. In the Chanda district of the Central Provinces I came on a few herds that actually lived in heavy tree jungle, and were as wild and difficult to bag as the shiest of spotted deer.

These antelope were once very plentiful in India, and Dr. Jerdon, writing of the large herds that formerly roamed the plains, says:—"I have seen larger herds in the neighbourhood of Jalna in the Deccan than anywhere else—occasionally some thousands together, with black bucks in proportion. Now and then, Dr. Scott informs me, they have been observed in the Government cattle farm at Hissar in herds calculated at 8,000 to 10,000."

Alas! *Tempora mutantur.* Nothing like these numbers are to be seen nowadays; however, they are still to be found in most parts of India, from the foot of the

Himalayas to Mysore, and from the Punjab right away to Assam in sufficient numbers to satisfy the lust for blood of the most ardent of budding sportsmen. The biggest herds are now to be found on the plains of the Punjab and western parts of the United Provinces, where herds of 100 or more are come across occasionally. In the Central Provinces, herds of anything more than 25 are seldom met with, whilst in Mysore, even smaller herds are the rule. There is no doubt that this buck carries a better head in Upper India than in the south.

He starts life with a fawn-coloured coat, and as he ages and his horns grow, his coat gradually goes through all the shades of brown till, in the mature animal, it is almost a jet black. The stomach, inside the limbs, a patch on the throat and circles round the eyes are white, contrasting very strongly with the black of the rest of his body, and further accentuated by a straight medial line along the body. The does are fawn-coloured throughout life, and are hornless.

The horns of the buck are spiral and annulated, and taper gradually towards the tips, where for three inches or so they are quite smooth; they grow out from the head in the form of a V; the spread varying in different individuals. A good pair may tape anything above 20 inches; I have seen a pair, secured in the Punjab, that measured $27\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The animal stands a shade less than three feet in height.

The black buck is generally the first wild animal on whom the new arrival in the country tries his novice hand and new rifle. The luckless animals around military cantonments have a thin time of it, and are greatly harassed by sporting Thomas Atkins, who is inveigled out for a shoot by the professional native shikaris, that hang around the barracks, with plausible stories of grand buck, to be had only a few miles out; and I am afraid that many more brown and useless animals fall in these excursions than those carrying really shootable heads. A visit to any taxidermist's work rooms is often a painful business, as there will be seen rows of antelope heads, that should never have been shot, and which it is a disgrace to put up on any

wall. I give Tommy, however, the credit of sparing does, and this is more than I can say of the petty zemindar who possesses a gun; the closest animal will invariably be taken, be it doe or fawn. It will be sad indeed if these antelopes share the same fate as the springbok, who once roamed the veldts of South Africa in countless thousands.

A herd generally holds one good buck, who guards his ladies very zealously and drives away the smaller buck, who hanging around the flanks of the herd, are a constant source of irritation to the big fellow by their mischievous attentions to some of his does. These youngsters often form herds of their own, and once in the United Provinces I saw a herd of 35, comprised of only young bucks of different stages of growth and shades of colour, without a doe amongst them. An albino buck is occasionally come across, and when such a *Rara Avis* is seen or heard of, eager sportsmen thirst to add him to their collection of trophies. The albino is only a freak of Nature, and examples are confined to particular restricted areas, where the strain is reproduced in a solitary animal now and again. I have shot four albino bucks at different periods in a certain locality of the United Provinces, and always looked upon them as valuable trophies, till I happened to visit the Zoological Gardens of Mysore a year ago, when to my surprise I saw no less than a dozen most perfect specimens of albinos, that far eclipsed any I had ever shot. They were snow white, whilst those I had secured were only a dingy white in comparison. I regret I made no inquiries as to whether the animals had been born in captivity or not. Besides albino antelope the gardens had a large number of albino spotted deer and fallow deer; the *penchant* for and the presence of so many albinos was quite inexplicable to me.

So many different methods of shooting black buck have been described, that it is difficult to say anything new or fresh on the subject; anecdotes can only be wearying to the reader. I shall content myself with a brief description of what I have found to be the best way of circumventing these antelopes. The country they inhabit is for the most part

open and flat, and does not lend itself to stalking and taking advantage of cover. The sight of a man running or crouching towards them will send the antelope off in very quick time. The only way to approach within shooting distance is to get hold of a native, such as they are accustomed to see every day around them, and, with this man following, to slowly walk across the front of the herd, gradually closing in on it. The antelope may possibly get suspicious, and a doe or two give a few bounds as though they were off, but if the distance between the herd and the sportsman is not lessened too rapidly, the animals will soon calm down and ultimately allow a closer approach. When within range the sportsman should gently stop and tell his companion to walk on, and so divert the attentions of any extra nervous animals, whilst he has his shot.

To follow behind his led horse is also a good plan. Whatever method is adopted, the main object of the sportsman should be to keep the animals from noticing that they are the objective of his coming on the scene. The solitary old bucks are always the hardest to approach, but even in their case patience generally brings its reward, and I have always found more satisfaction in bagging one of these cute old fellows than in getting one out of a herd; it is especially gratifying to topple him over like a rabbit just as he has got into his stride and is chuckling at having got the better of you.

I have found a .256 Mannlicher hard to beat for black buck work, but at the same time a word of caution is necessary to the user of one of these weapons, to see all is clear before he fires, especially before bringing the magazine into play. Buck often inhabit highly cultivated stretches of ground, and it is most nerve-trying and very irritating to see the frequency with which natives pop up their heads as soon as a shot is fired, in spots where you could have sworn nothing but a hare could squat without being seen. I never fire one of these high velocity rifles in any other position but standing, as there is less chance of the bullets travelling far; and even then generally undergo a bad

quarter of an hour immediately after a miss, expecting at every moment to hear a biped instead of a quadruped has dropped to my shot. I touch wood as I write, that up to now I have had no accident to record.

I shall never forget one occasion on which I got a good fright, and thought I had reduced by one the teeming millions of India's population. It happened in this way. Whilst strolling along the low bank of a narrow river I espied a fine buck rushing towards it with the intention of crossing about 100 yards above me. I did not fire till the animal was splashing through the water, which at the spot was only a few inches in depth. I fired at him in the centre of the river-bed, but seeing him carry on and disappear over the top of the opposite bank, I came to the conclusion that I had missed him, and so continued on my way. I had hardly gone a hundred yards when I heard a native bawling out "Goli lug gya" (the bullet has hit). I felt that the accident, which I had so carefully avoided for years, had at last occurred and that I had shot a man. Great was my relief, however, on the man coming up to me, to hear that it was only the buck that had intercepted my bullet, and had fallen a short way off. I was fearing the bullet had ricochetted off a stone in the river and, as I said, thinned by one the population of India.

Black buck shooting is good enough sport in those parts of the country where nothing better or bigger is to be obtained, but it palls very quickly on all but those whom I hope I may be pardoned for classing as easily pleased sportsmen. No wood-craft is necessary in its pursuit, and to the old stager any sport that does not call for a certain amount of skill and jungle craft is hardly worth the following. A couple of long dogs are very useful in pulling down and bringing to bag any buck that are likely to get away wounded and die a lingering death.

Black buck venison is dry, but I confess to being very fond of it, when served up roasted with tamarind sauce and with red currant jelly; I much prefer it to chital venison. The skins make pretty door mats. I have seen

a big carpet for a room made out of selected skins, arranged in such a way as to resemble a chess board with squares of black and white. I saw another at the Allahabad Exhibition for which the owner told me he had refused an offer of six hundred rupees.



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RAVINE DEER (*Gazella Bennettii*).

Hindi, *Chinkara, Phuskela.*

Canarese, *Budari.*

This graceful little gazelle is common throughout the country, and ranges from the foot of the Himalayas to Mysore, south of which I doubt whether it is to be found. It is the only gazelle that India can boast of, though the Persian and Thibetan gazelles are to be found on its borders.

The name of ravine deer is a misnomer, but, as it is so universally used, most sportsmen accept it and never bother to correct any but the “*Sub janta*” person (one assuming to know everything) when they hear the animal called a deer. Its name of chinkara is most commonly used.

They are most plentiful in Rajputana, Bundelkhund and Rewah, all hot, dry and arid tracts. They are not partial to low-lying and heavily wooded country, but are fond of scrub jungle, cut up with ravines and broken ground. The ravines of the Jumna River, throughout the length of the United Provinces, hold them in large numbers.

The chinkara is given a place in the list of the carnivora’s prey for the same reason as the black buck, inhabiting jungle tracts. Besides the panther and hunting leopard, the little animal is worried by wolves, who,

inhabiting the same ground, play havoc with the fawns and even account occasionally for adults.

The chinkara is of a brownish fawn above, which is separated by a distinct medial line from the white of its underparts; the tail and small tufts on their knees are black. Twelve inches is the size of a good pair of horns; the majority seldom exceed 9 inches in length. The animal stands barely 28 inches in height. The does also possess horns but these are thin, and not annulated like those of the buck, and seldom longer than 4 inches.

These gazelles are usually met with in small herds of four to eight animals, and, when inhabiting the same country as black buck, often mix up with herds of the latter animal. They are, however, easily distinguishable from the young buck antelope by the constant wagging of their little black tails, which never seem to be at rest.

I remember, on three consecutive mornings, coming on a fine little buck, feeding with a small herd of nilgai cows. He was a remarkably cute little fellow, and always struck out a course for himself and disappeared in some scrub jungle no sooner he saw me, deserting his less wary and more clumsy companions without the smallest hesitation.

The animal, when disturbed, gives out a sharp little sneeze, preparatory to making off, and often, though not seen, give themselves away with this peculiar sound. When a bit uncertain of the nature of the object disturbing them, they will stand and stamp the ground with their forefeet, all the time uttering their little notes of warning and alarm.

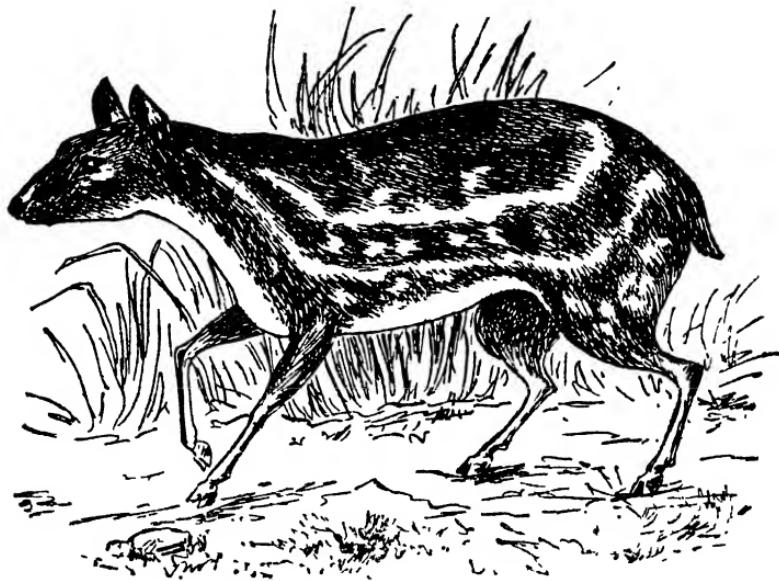
Chinkara are the most irritating little beasts to shoot, and many a poor and indifferent shot has, I am afraid, been led a long dance when after them. They give only a small and ever shifting mark to fire at, and as the hand of the man with the gun is pretty shaky by the time he has negotiated the broken ground in his way and succeeded in getting close enough for a shot, the chances are, a miss is more probable than a hit.

In the days of my griffinage, armed with a clumsy Winchester, I used to allow myself to be led on for miles by any fine buck I saw, imagining stupidly that climbing

over the next ravine would get me the shot, only to find when I got to the top, perspiring and very hot, that the little brute was still 400 yards distant, provokingly wagging his black tail and staring hard at the very hot face, that I so carefully and cautiously thrust over the top. Another long stalk, to the accompaniment of strong adjectives hurled at the brute, did not seem to lessen the distance by a single yard, nor to make that abominable ever-wagging tail any less irritating. The end of such stalks was inevitably the same; a very tired and angry man could be seen emptying his magazine in an absurdly childish temper at little dark objects disappearing in the distance. The painful trudge home under a broiling sun, accompanied by a cracking headache was all that I usually got out of these unsuccessful attempts to bag chinkara. However much I suffered, my ardour never abated, and the next day found me as ready as the day before to be fooled.

As the years rolled on, I was less and less tempted into these futile stalks, and learnt that the best way with these gazelles is to take the shot as soon as they are seen, and before they see me and start at their old games again. I became the possessor of a ducky little .256 Mannlicher, with which I sprung some very unpleasant surprises on them.

The Thomson's gazelle of East Africa, commonly called "The Tommy," is very like the Indian chinkara in general appearance and build, and is as cute an animal to bag. The African variety, however, have a black medial line, and are even more gracefully built. The horns are just as long but are thinner and set closer together.



CHAPTER XXV.

THE MOUSE DEER (*Meminna Indica*).

Hindi, *Pisora*.

Canarese, *Barka*.

This little animal cannot be said to be plentiful in any part of the country, but it is come across occasionally in the bamboo jungles of the Central Provinces, and more frequently in the jungles of the Wynnaad, Southern India and the Western Ghats. I have heard the Kols of Central India speak of it, so I expect it occurs even north of the Central Provinces, along the rocky Kymore range. It does not appear to be over plentiful in Mysore, though the only one I have ever seen or shot was in a jungle of that province. A drawing made from a photograph of this animal heads this chapter, and my measurements record a length—from nose to root of tail—of 23 inches, and a height of 12 inches.

The general colouring of the animal is a greyish-brown, with yellowish-white stripes along the sides of the body. These stripes are joined by other transverse lines across the loins. The face is pointed, and the animal, seen from a distance, looks like a young pig, which is similarly striped along the body. The legs are extremely delicate and thin,

and the hoofs turn slightly upwards at the points; the males have large canine teeth, that have a certain amount of play in their sockets.

Though I have wandered about a good deal in jungles in most parts of India, I have never come across this animal till the other day in Mysore. I was motoring back to my camp late one night, when by the aid of the head lights I saw the little creature in the centre of a road that passed through some dense bamboo jungle. It seemed quite confused by the dazzling lights, and I was easily able to shoot it as it tripped along in front of the car.



CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WILD BOAR (*Sus Indicus*).

Hindi, *Suar, Dukar, Barail, Bad-janwar* (*Unclean animal*).
Canarese, *Handi*.

Though given the last place in this work, the wild pig plays a great part in the carnivora's bill of fare, and, with the exception of large boars, falls an easy prey to them. They are common throughout India, in both heavy and light jungles, and in expanses of long grass. They also inhabit Burmah and Ceylon.

A good sized boar stands three feet at the shoulder, and is a heavy and strongly built animal, provided with formidable tusks, of which he makes terrible use when charging those that molest him. He is of no value to the gunner; but is a treasure to the pig-sticker on horseback, and in many parts of India, where he is ridden down and speared, the shooting of one is looked upon with as much abhorrence as would be that of a fox in the hunting counties of England. There are many tracts of hilly jungle country, however, where riding him is out of the question, and here only is any one justified in bringing the rifle into use against him.

As this work is concerned not with the boar, whose aggressive courage forms the theme of many songs popular with members of tent clubs in northern and central India at their periodical gatherings, but only with him who inhabits country in which a horse cannot be used, I shall give a brief description of the animal, and its ways and habits.

I have already said he is a powerfully built animal, and to this add, with a good turn of speed and undaunted courage, ready to take on all comers; his tusks are curved and long, sharpened to a fine edge and point through constantly grinding against each other, and with these supported by the weight of his charge and driven with a vicious upward thrust, he cuts through flesh and bone, as a knife through brown paper. The colour of a full-grown animal is a brownish-black; the stomach is nearly naked, being only scantily covered with coarse hair; a crest of stiff bristles runs down the spine from the back of the skull; the bristles on his cheeks and throat are reversed and point outwards. Wild pig go about together in what is commonly known as sounders by sportsmen, the size of which depends on whether the animals are plentiful or otherwise in the neighbourhood. The little squeakers are marked longitudinally with pale brown stripes, and go about in the sounders from a very early age.

Wild pigs are carnivorous in so far that they eat carrion, for I have, more than once, had one of these animals turn up at a panther's "kill," over which I happened to be sitting, and have seen him busily set to at it, giving expression to his relish by little satisfied grunts from the inside of the carcass.

Though I have not personally come on a case, there are many instances recorded, of solitary wild boars getting the better of and even killing tigers that attacked them. Sterndale, a keen sportsman, naturalist and author of several interesting books on the life of the jungles, writes:—"An old boar is generally the chief, but occasionally he gets driven from the herd, and wanders solitary and morose, and is in such a case an awkward customer to tackle. An old boar of this kind is generally a match for

a tiger; in fact few tigers, unless young and inexperienced, would attack one. I have known two instances of tigers being killed by boars; one happened a few miles from the station of Seoni, to which place we had the animal carried. On another occasion, whilst on tour in the district, a deputation from a distant village came into my camp to beg of me to visit them, and shoot a large boar which had taken possession of a small rocky hill, and from it made his nightly forays into their rice fields, and was given to attacking those who approached him. I went and got the boar out and shot him, but lost a tiger, which also sneaked out and broke through a line of beaters; these two were the sole occupants of this small isolated knoll, and lived evidently on terms of mutual respect. The boar was the largest I had ever seen or killed, but, as the sun was getting fierce, and I had far to ride to camp, I regret I left him to the villagers without taking any measurements."

Wild pigs are great raiders of crops, and the cultivators, in tracts where they abound, suffer greatly, especially with regard to their sugar-cane. The animals are shot without mercy on moonlight nights by native shikaris over water and in cultivation; Mohammedans even, to whom the pig in any form is anathema, joining in the battle against them. There are some high castes of Hindus, who, though they will not touch the flesh of the domesticated village pig, will readily eat that of the wild one.

In jungle tracts, the animal is a clean feeder, and I have occasionally enjoyed a chop from one I have shot, and also occasionally a piece of roast pork with nice crackling. This, however, has only been when my cook was a Hindu or native Christian. More than one Mohammedan cook have I been obliged to dismiss on his refusing to cook the meat, though he never demurred at cooking bacon and ham. But as the servant question yearly gets more difficult, during late years I leave *Sus Indicus* alone, and content myself with the homely ham and bacon, which the Mohammedan cook, in spite of suspicious and inquiring glances from his fellow Mohammedan servants, gives out to be prime beef from "Master's Home."

There is a low caste, called Kanjurs, who go about the country with packs of pariah dogs and hunt wild pigs, spearing them with crude long handled weapons as their dogs bring them to bay. However valueless these dogs may be, this practice is a very cruel one, as a good fighting boar, when come on, cuts them down with the greatest of ease. I had a fine and game fox-terrier and a good Rampur hound once tossed and killed by a boar, which they came on, and which I was unable to keep them from tackling.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ARM CHAIR REFLECTIONS.

It is over his after-dinner smoke that the sportsman, especially if alone, is given to living over again the incidents of many eventful days, and during the process reflections crowd in, one upon another, of his successes, disappointments and mistakes. In the case of an error in judgment, to be wise after the event brings little consolation, and he very soon recognizes the fact that Nature has not been niggardly in its gift of instinct to the wild denizens of the forest, and feels that his reasoning powers, asserted by many to be the gift of man alone, are often beaten when up against this protective instinct possessed by these same animals.

After an unsuccessful day in the jungles I have often asked myself such questions as "Have animals reasoning powers? If not, how could that sambar have slipped away? How is it that tiger would not come on to his 'kill'?" The conclusion I have been forced to in the end is that animals can to a certain extent associate ideas, and that they undoubtedly have memories. Instinct alone is not sufficient protection for them, but requires memory and the association of ideas and thoughts to aid it. That animals possess intelligence is an undoubted and proved fact, some species being gifted more than others. This combination of instinct with memory, association of ideas and intelligence, though the latter be far inferior to that of man, is a factor that should never be ignored by the sportsman in his quest after game.

A disturbed bush, with its leaves turned upside down, in the vicinity of a tiger's "kill" will make him hesitate to approach, and it all depends on the extent of memory and experience of that particular animal whether he will or will not feel that there is something wrong with that bush and consequently with the neighbourhood of his "kill." If he

draws back, what is it for if not to think it out and investigate further? He is suspicious now, and when he eventually makes up his mind to clear out, it is hard to ascribe it to anything but reasoning powers. Exactly where reasoning commences and ends is a problem not simple to determine, and the deduction that animals are capable of any sustained continuity of ideas is untenable in the face of facts. It is unnecessary for me to attempt to compare the intelligence of different wild animals; experience alone can be the sportsman's tutor when dealing with them. But, for downright cunning and stealth, the tiger is *facile princeps*, the panther making a good second.

It is during the night-watch over a "kill," that the sportsman begins to grasp the fact that the odds are not so very much in his favour when he has to deal with these two animals, and to realize how impotent he would be against them were they aggressively inclined and not imbued with an inexplicably instinctive fear of man.

In the preceding chapters, only the larger inhabitants of the jungles have been dealt with. Besides these there is a wealth of animal and bird life to be met with, which is always of interest to the man who has the love of Nature's wild places in his very bones. To such natures the pleasure of killing is of secondary importance to the satisfaction felt in successfully pitting their wits against the cunning of the wild animals they hunt. Any man who roams the jungles cannot but be struck with the way in which Nature, or if he prefers to call it so, Providence, intervenes to protect those that are handicapped by not being gifted with an intelligence on a par with himself. A great deal of this ever present solicitude on the part of Nature is misunderstood by the sportsman, who generally ascribes his want of success to bad luck. When a succession of blank days is his fate, one can hardly blame him for imagining that bad luck is dogging his steps; calm and dispassionate reasoning in such circumstances is the gift of few. Perseverance and a closer study of the ways and habits of the jungles' inmates is the only way to fight this apparent bad luck. When certain success has been denied you at the critical moment it is

only a case of the jungle refusing to give up those that seek its shelter and protection.

Blank days are many in the life of the sportsman, and none knows better than he that shooting is not simply a lust for killing, and that it is far from the cruel pastime some folks would make it out to be. If indulged in in a fair and sportsman-like spirit, the odds cannot be said to be overwhelmingly in favour of the man with the gun. Most books on sport—rightly I think—spare the reader long accounts of unsatisfactory and unsuccessful days, and record those that afford him interesting reading, and at the same time the writers themselves a certain amount of pleasure to record. So the reader should understand that what appears to be a long tale of successes would compare very unfavourably with a similar record of blank days.

Now to turn from abstract matters to realities. The carnivores of the jungles also have their blank days as well as their days of plenty, and seem to recognize the truth of the saying "Half a loaf is better than no bread at all," for, if one of the larger animals mentioned in this work is not to be had, they will not turn away from smaller fry, and a big tiger will readily kill and devour such small creatures as porcupines, armadillos, iguanas, etc., if come on. Panthers, along with the different wild cats of the jungle, will do their best when hungry to kill pea-fowl and even jungle-fowl. Monkeys are looked at with a longing eye by the sneaking panther, and are sometimes caught unawares when feeding on the ground. There is a general belief amongst natives that monkeys are fascinated and mesmerised by the fixed stare of panthers to such an extent that they fall off their perches, just as birds are known to be paralysed through fright at the sight of an approaching snake. Certain it is that monkeys through sheer fright at the sight of a panther under their tree will often fall to the ground by missing their hold, jumping from branch to branch.

The mention of snakes recalls to mind a peculiar belief I once had expounded to me by a native shikari. Speaking of the king cobra or hamadryad, the man told me in quite

a serious manner that it rose to its full length on its tail, when attacking a man, and struck the hapless human being on the top of the head, thus cracking the skull and exposing the brain which it leisurely set to work to swallow. Fantastic though some of these ideas and beliefs may be, a sportsman can derive a deal of interest from listening to them, and sifting the probabilities from mere possibilities.

Most people, and even a good few sportsmen, would be rather sceptical of the statement that tigers are able to climb into trees, and for this reason I had abstained from giving my own opinion on the matter. But now that I have irrefutable evidence in the shape of a photograph of a tiger up a tree, I no longer hesitate to state that tigers do occasionally clamber into trees. During my wanderings in the Mysore jungles I have come on three trees in different parts that bore unmistakable signs on the bark of being regularly climbed by tigers, the claw marks on the trunks and branches being those of tiger, and not of bear or panther. It is only in Mysore, I must admit, that I have observed this peculiar habit of tigers.

The photograph is inserted through the courtesy of H. H. The Maharajah of Mysore, in whose well stocked and well kept Zoological Gardens it was taken. The animal which forms the subject of the picture is a full-grown tigress, and she was so fond of climbing into the tree that the Garden authorities have had a wooden platform constructed in the branches, about fourteen feet from the ground, for it to lie out on. There is no ladder or any other help for the animal to ascend by; it simply swarms up the trunk to reach its perch, where it spends hours together, fast asleep.

There are also to be found trees here and there on tiger-frequented paths where the animal regularly sharpens and cleans his claws. Judging from the height at which these clawings in the bark are to be seen, the animal must rear himself up against the tree and, reaching as far as he is able, embed his claws in the soft bark and pull downwards with the object of cleaning them of the blood and flesh that



“A dexterous climber in the Mysore Zoo”

must adhere during his meals on raw and sometimes nearly putrid flesh.

A sportsman after tiger, besides searching for pug marks, should keep his eyes open for other signs that will tell him of the presence in the jungle of the game he is seeking. The clawing on trees, mentioned above, is one of these signs, and another is the scratching up here and there of the turf or mud alongside the jungle paths. Then again, the excitement at night, represented by calls of alarm, of the deer in the forest should always be noted. Deadly quiet reigning through any forest known to hold sambar and spotted deer is a bad sign, and at the very least signifies that *Felis Tigris* is not at home, for were it otherwise he could not escape the vigilant eyes of someone or other of the deer species he habitually preys on, and who never fail to call or bark at him on sight.

Should a tiger's footprints be come on any day down a particular path or *nullah* bed, the hope that he will come the same way the following night is usually doomed to disappointment. Unless the spot is very close to his lair, and is the only convenient way to his further nocturnal wanderings or his latest "kill," it is rare indeed, especially with the educated tigers to be met with nowadays, that he will take the same road on two consecutive nights. Anyway, if his tracks are come on, and it is a suitable spot with every likelihood of its being revisited, the sportsman should tie out for him there, and not be discouraged if the bait is not taken for many nights. It is a fatal mistake to move these baits about, and as sure as you persist in doing so you will end in not getting a "kill" at all.

I have often in my greenhorn days, when I found my leave was nearing expiry, been persuaded by a native shikari to change the spots for my "ties," and every time I did so I regretted it deeply, for no sooner had the change been made than I found the tiger passed by the old spot. When on short leave, I confess to have done this often in spite of the lessons learnt on each occasion, my impatience getting the better of my reasoned judgment and allowing me to be misled into what I now consider a fatal error.

I remember one case well that happened many years ago. I was out shooting with a friend, equally as new at the game as myself, and we sat up at two different spots with live animals tied under our respective trees, that were about four hundred yards apart. I had won the toss for choice of places, and sat up fruitlessly for three nights when I suggested we might change places. We did so, and the very first night from my new *machan* I heard my friend fire and wound a tiger a couple of hours after dark. This certainly was a case of bad luck for me, but indirectly goes towards the confirming of my opinion that "ties" should not be moved about.

I think the above few remarks, together with what I have written in the first five chapters on tiger, might well be considered to exhaust the subject of this most interesting animal, but I feel I cannot put down my pen without touching on a few more interesting points on jungle life. Ursus, especially he of the Sloth variety, has always been to me a very entertaining and fascinating creature, and I think deserves a few more lines than he has been given. In a couple of chapters on the bear, I hope I have not failed to show him up in his true character of an irascible and busy old fellow, guilty of all kinds of ludicrous and eccentric behaviour, and I shall now give him just one more paragraph to illustrate the inquisitive turn of mind with which he is blessed.

Whilst staying in a little forest bungalow in Southern India I was greatly entertained to hear from the caretaker and men of an adjacent village, that during the rainy season a crusty old bear used to regularly at night, when the house was not occupied, walk into the verandah and thump on the doors with his heavy paw and give vent to loud ursine grousing at not being able to get in and explore further. The verandah had a trellis work railing with an iron barred gate; these bars had been treated shamefully and bent out of shape by the animal climbing over them; the plaster had been broken off the corner of one of the walls, due no doubt to the corner being used as a rubbing post by the animal to obtain some relief from the ticks with which it must have

been infested. The caretaker said he used to shut himself up in his little out-house and tremble with fear lest his door might next be sounded by the animal. I remember another forest bungalow in the Central Provinces, where I noticed a bear had dug a large hole in the kitchen floor, doubtless to get at a tasty white-ants' nest, which his sensitive nostrils told him lay just below the surface.

In a very dry jungle of the Kymore hills a couple of bears at night used to visit regularly a well, within a few yards of a solitary Kol's hut, to quench their thirst at the overflow water, and one night, when by mischance the owner of the hut had left a large leather bucket at the well, these two animals through sheer temper tore it to shreds. I happened to visit this jungle a few days after this occurrence, and in a beat managed to rid the poor man of one of these wanton destroyers of a very important article of his small stock of worldly goods.

The bear, as I have said before, can afford the man with the rifle a deal of sport, but my advice to all new hands who intend to rouse his ire by giving him a lead pill or two is, not to get closer to him than is absolutely necessary, for looks belie him as to quickness of movement and retaliation.

I am afraid I have given Ursus a bit more mention than I just promised, and will finish with him and go on to touch on that very important being,—aide-de-camp as we might call him of the sportsman on his shooting trips—namely the native shikari. No book on the jungles can be considered complete without some mention, however small it be, of this important personage and his fellow jungle dwellers.

In all parts of India, with the one exception of Mysore, I have always found these jungle folk ready to assist with information regarding the haunts and movements of the wild animals in their forests, and even with personal service when paid for it. Malaria and hookworm, both rife in extensive tracts of forest lands of this Province, have no doubt a very enervating effect, and must be accepted as the reason for this indolence and disinclination to work.

To the sportsman of moderate means, the professional shikari, who owns a gun of sorts, is seldom a desirable assistant; money is his god, and he values himself too highly. He is usually a man who will never himself fire at anything that is not within twenty yards of the muzzle of his gun, yet should his employer happen to miss a difficult shot he will always tell his fellow villagers that the Sahib is no good and cannot hit a haystack at fifty yards. He has been used to potting over does and fawns without hesitation, and his employer refusing to do the same will make him discontented and disinclined to further exert himself. Professional shikaris will almost invariably be found to be inveterate liars and humbugs, and a thorn in the side of the man who shoots without engaging them, in jungles they look upon as their own. They will do their utmost, using sly and underhand methods, to spoil sport, and will prevent as far as possible any others in the locality giving the Sahib information as regards game.

I once had the misfortune to be shooting at a spot in Mysore that held four of these shikaris possessing guns, and with the intention of extending my knowledge of these folk I sent for them. Only a couple of days' perambulations through the jungle with these men was enough to sicken me more than ever of their kind. I could see there was no hope of any sport so long as these men hung around my camp, though the jungle held no less than three tigers at the time. What really hastened the parting between them and myself was the attempt made by the eldest of the party to inveigle a ten rupee note out of me at the end of our second day of acquaintance. This man seriously told me that there was a very powerful god of the jungle who protected the wild animals and who could only be induced to allow a tiger to be shot there after a ten rupee note had been suspended from the branch of a tree that grew over a shrine in the forest. The note, he went on to explain, was only to cheat the god into looking with a kindly eye on our rambles in his jungles; when a tiger had actually been bagged, the note could be recovered and only one rupee spent in giving thanks to the god. He failed to mention what effect



Types of Professional Shikaris.

the dew and the wind would have on this bit of paper, probably thinking it superfluous to do so when he intended it to be safe in his pocket long ere nightfall.

Rascals of this type, I am glad to say, are rare in the jungles; whilst there is plenty of material from which good and reliable assistants can be shaped. Most people, who have lived in or near the jungles from their infancy, have had a certain amount of experience of wild animals, and usually require very little training to turn out reliable shikaris. Some tribes and castes, more than others, sooner fit themselves to the duties of trackers and shikaris, the exceptionally good man, I am afraid, is born to it by nature. The difficulty is to obtain a man capable of sustained efforts, and it is just here that the average shikari fails. It is during a tiger or a bison shoot where shots are few and far between, and hardly any at game which fill the flesh pots in his home, that the qualifications of a shikari are put to a severe test, and he will usually be found to stale to his work when his employer is having a run of poor luck. It is a good plan therefore to give up a day occasionally and shoot a deer or a pig to gladden his and his fellow workers' hearts. It is needless to add this miscellaneous shooting should be far from the patch of forest that holds the tiger or the bison you are after.

In every circle of forest villages, if not in every village, there will usually be found one man who is recognized by all to possess an intimate knowledge of the surrounding jungle and its wild animals, and should this individual not own and be given to using a gun himself, the sportsman cannot do better than engage his services, especially so, if he is visiting those jungles for the first time. As in other walks of life, standards of intelligence and usefulness vary in different individuals; but as a whole, if treated fair by his employer, this type of man will be loyal, and do his best to show what sport there is in the neighbouring jungles.

The sportsman will find he loses nothing in dignity by occasionally having half an hour's friendly talk with him; on the contrary, he will learn much about the life of the jungle by encouraging these usually reserved men to talk

freely. An occasional timely gift of money to buy some native liquor at the end of any especially tiring or lucky day is not thrown away, but goes far towards acquiring what is half the battle in a shoot—a contented and willing shikari.

It is a mistake, however, in my opinion to take such a man away from the jungles he knows, for if this is done the sportsman will find that his shikari has merged into a gun-bearer and nothing more. He will not trouble to make himself thoroughly conversant with any jungle that is not his home, and will rely on the local man to lead him about. It is a strange custom amongst these jungle shikaris when away from their own jungles, however intelligent and good at their work they may be, not to usurp the place of a local man, and they will defer to his opinion in all matters in an altogether inexplicable manner.

Whatever their faults, however, they are preferable to the men who swagger to a shooting camp with guns on their shoulders and glibly promise to get the sportsman anything his heart desires. The quartette I have alluded to a couple of pages back are of the type that are surely and steadily thinning our jungles by sitting up over water and salt licks on moonlight nights, and potting over everything that comes their way. Tigers are left alone, but yet, the sight of men regularly sitting up at night and the constant reports of firearms has made the animals extraordinarily wary, so much so, that they hesitate to return to their "kills." This type of Indian shikari shoots merely with the intention of making a profit out of it, and is usually merciless as the jungle dog, sparing neither doe nor fawn.

It undoubtedly requires patience to put up with and train a raw villager, but in shooting, more than in other sports, loyal and willing co-operation is absolutely essential, and the sportsman's assistant should be one who will share in the same spirit as his master the successes and disappointments of the game, and the latter should be able to gauge the former's capabilities and make the best of his failings.

Champaranga, whose faithful service to me is recognized by the insertion of his photograph in this book, is only one



"Champaranga

instance of a raw specimen of the jungles who, though trying at times, was well worth a dozen professional pot-hunters and swaggering gun-bearers. Obstinate and headstrong, and with an unquenchable thirst for strong drinks, it was a couple of seasons before I could make anything out of him. His duties certainly were many and varied, *inter alia*, to put out the baits, tie up *machans*, act as my closest stop in beats, and, most important of all, to keep me well informed of the doings of any professional shikaris in the neighbourhood of the jungle I happened to be shooting in. Though I was often not satisfied with the way he carried out these duties, I never found him disloyal or untrustworthy, and recognizing he was not capable of anything better, forgave him much because he was a faithful and staunch gun-bearer. I could not talk his dialect very fluently, so was probably, very often unable to see the force of the excuses he gave to explain away the constant headaches and fits of sluggishness he suffered from, which I knew to be due solely to his frequent visits to the village liquor shop.

“Good old Champaranga! You were always ready to sally out with your master when he wanted you, so I shall say no more hard things about you. How often have I stood by and watched you tying up a bait for a tiger, and been amused by the way you asked forgiveness of the animal for offering it up to the King of the Jungles. You would first touch one forefoot and then the other, and then touch your own forehead as though in expiation of your leaving the animal to the mercies of the dark jungle.”

In my experience, the Gonds and Baigas of the Central Provinces make the best shikaris' and trackers, and I have nothing but admiration and praise for many who have worked for me. If there should be a Happy Hunting Ground in the great Hereafter for the keen sportsman, as there is for the Red Indian, I should like nothing better than to roam through it with good old Juria Gond at my back, carrying my spare rifle.

The true and real life of the jungle begins as darkness enshrouds it, and its inhabitants prowl and roam through

it unrestrained by thoughts of that hateful and dreaded creature—MAN. The watcher over a tiger or panther “kill” is struck with the stealthy and invisible life he hears around him, and though his watch be a fruitless one he can hardly say no pleasure has been derived out of it. The surly “A-oongh” of the suspicious tiger, as he moves off from his inviting “kill,” tells the experienced watcher that the game is up, and that he might as well settle down for the night on his uncomfortable *machan*. Hope dies hard, yet sleep overtakes him at last, and he closes his eyes to rest as best he can till the crow of the old Silver Hackle jungle cock rouses him at dawn. He is awake in a moment and listens to the lusty crow, which for all the world sounds like the words “Get up, tr-r-rot out!” Another day, and let us hope a red letter one, has begun for the man who finds many of his greatest pleasures under the restful and kindly shadows of the jungles.

USEFUL VOCABULARY FOR THE JUNGLES.

(Phonetically spelt.)

| | |
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| á, as in dát pronounced dart. | é, as in lét pronounced late. |
| ð, as in mó̄t pronounced moat. | t, as in bát pronounced bath. |
| a, at end of word as in dáta, is pronounced er as in darter. | |
| r, as in már is rolled slightly. | i, at end of word, is pronounced e. |
| Air— <i>howa</i> . | Cat— <i>billi</i> . |
| Alum— <i>phitkurri</i> . | Chair— <i>chowki</i> , <i>koorsi</i> . |
| Animal— <i>jánwur</i> . | Clean a.— <i>sáfa</i> . |
| Ant— <i>chooti</i> . | Clean v.— <i>sáfa kurro</i> . |
| Ashes— <i>rákhi</i> . | Climb v.— <i>churho</i> . |
| Ask— <i>poochō</i> . | Cloth— <i>kupra</i> . |
| Axe— <i>tángi</i> , <i>koolhiri</i> . | Coffee— <i>káfi</i> . |
| Bad— <i>khuráb</i> . | Cold— <i>thunda</i> . |
| Bag— <i>jhöla</i> , <i>thaili</i> . | Cow— <i>gái</i> , <i>göroo</i> . |
| Bamboo— <i>bánse</i> . | Crooked— <i>téhra</i> . |
| Bed— <i>pullung</i> . | Cut v.— <i>káto</i> . |
| Big— <i>burra</i> . | Dark— <i>undhiála</i> . |
| Binoculars— <i>doorbeen</i> . | Day— <i>din</i> . |
| Bird— <i>chirya</i> . | Deer— <i>hirun</i> , <i>mirug</i> . |
| Black— <i>kála</i> . | Dew— <i>ȫs</i> . |
| Blanket— <i>kumbul</i> . | Dig v.— <i>khödo</i> . |
| Blood— <i>khoon</i> , <i>lahoo</i> . | Dog— <i>koota</i> . |
| Bone— <i>huddi</i> . | Don't— <i>mut</i> . |
| Boots— <i>joota</i> . | Drink v.— <i>pio</i> . |
| Box— <i>bukus</i> . | Drive n.— <i>hánk</i> . |
| Bring— <i>liáo</i> . | Drive v.— <i>hánko</i> . |
| Buffalo— <i>bhainse</i> , <i>böda</i> . | Ducks— <i>buttuk</i> . |
| Bullet— <i>göli</i> . | Dust n.— <i>dhool</i> , <i>gurda</i> |
| Bullock— <i>byle</i> . | Eight— <i>áth</i> . |
| Burn v.— <i>julláo</i> . | Eighty— <i>ussi</i> . |
| Buy— <i>mölö</i> . | Elephant— <i>háthi</i> . |
| Call v.— <i>booláo</i> . | Enough— <i>bus</i> . |
| Camp n.— <i>déra</i> . | Evening— <i>shám</i> , <i>sánjh</i> |
| Careful (to be)— <i>khubbur dár</i> . | Far— <i>door</i> . |
| Cart n.— <i>gári</i> , <i>chukra</i> . | Fat a.— <i>möta</i> . |
| Cartridge— <i>kártoos</i> , <i>töta</i> . | Fat n.— <i>churbi</i> . |
| Caste— <i>ját</i> . | Fence— <i>bári</i> . |

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Fever— <i>bokhár.</i> | Kill <i>v.</i> — <i>máro.</i> |
| Field— <i>khēt.</i> | Knife— <i>chhoori.</i> |
| Fifty— <i>puchás.</i> | Knock <i>v.</i> — <i>thōko.</i> |
| Fire <i>v.</i> (shoot)— <i>máro.</i> | Ladder— <i>seerhi.</i> |
| Fire <i>n.</i> — <i>ág.</i> | Lamp— <i>butti.</i> |
| Five— <i>páñch.</i> | Lazy— <i>soost.</i> |
| Fly <i>n.</i> — <i>mukkhá.</i> | Leaf— <i>putti.</i> |
| Food— <i>khána.</i> | Leg— <i>páo.</i> |
| Fool <i>n.</i> — <i>oolloo.</i> | Life— <i>ján.</i> |
| Forest— <i>junggul.</i> | Lime (chunam)— <i>choona.</i> |
| Forget— <i>bhoolo.</i> | Long— <i>hənba.</i> |
| Forty— <i>chálees.</i> | Loose <i>a.</i> — <i>dheela.</i> |
| Four— <i>chár.</i> | Lose— <i>khōna.</i> |
| Fowl— <i>moorghí.</i> | Machan— <i>muchán.</i> |
| Fruit— <i>phul.</i> | Man— <i>ádmi.</i> |
| Get <i>v.</i> — <i>láo.</i> | Meat— <i>gōst.</i> |
| Get up <i>v.</i> — <i>oottho.</i> | Medicine— <i>dowa.</i> |
| Go— <i>jáo.</i> | Meet <i>v.</i> — <i>millo.</i> |
| Gone— <i>gia.</i> | Midday— <i>dō pahur.</i> |
| Good— <i>uchha.</i> | Money— <i>paisa.</i> |
| Gun— <i>bundook.</i> | Monkey— <i>bundur.</i> |
| Gun (D. B.)— <i>dō nulli bun-dook.</i> | Moon— <i>chánd.</i> |
| Grass— <i>ghánse.</i> | Moonlight— <i>chándni.</i> |
| Hair— <i>bál.</i> | More— <i>áwr.</i> |
| Hard— <i>kurra, sukht.</i> | Morning— <i>fujjir, sooba.</i> |
| Hare— <i>khurqosh.</i> | Mosquito— <i>muchhur.</i> |
| Head— <i>seerh, moondi.</i> | Much— <i>bahoot.</i> |
| Heavy— <i>bhári.</i> | Mud— <i>mutti.</i> |
| High— <i>ooncha.</i> | My— <i>humára.</i> |
| Hill— <i>pahár, tōria.</i> | Near— <i>kurreeb, nusdeek.</i> |
| Hold <i>v.</i> — <i>pukro.</i> | Nine— <i>now.</i> |
| Hole— <i>guddha, chēd.</i> | Ninety— <i>nubbē.</i> |
| Horn— <i>singh.</i> | No— <i>nahi.</i> |
| Horse— <i>ghōra.</i> | Now— <i>ubbhi.</i> |
| Hot— <i>gurrum.</i> | Night— <i>rát.</i> |
| House— <i>ghur.</i> | Old— <i>poorána, boodha.</i> |
| Hundred— <i>sao.</i> | On— <i>oopur.</i> |
| Hurry <i>v.</i> — <i>juldi kurro.</i> | One— <i>ék.</i> |
| Ill— <i>binár.</i> | Pain— <i>durrud.</i> |
| In— <i>undur, bheetur.</i> | Paper— <i>káguz.</i> |
| Join <i>v.</i> — <i>jōrō.</i> | Partridge— <i>teetur.</i> |
| Jungle— <i>junggul.</i> | Pea-fowl— <i>mōr.</i> |
| Kill <i>n.</i> — <i>gára, murri.</i> | Place <i>n.</i> — <i>jugga.</i> |
| | Place <i>v.</i> — <i>rukko.</i> |

| | |
|---|--|
| Quail— <i>buttier</i> . | Straight— <i>seedha</i> . |
| Quick— <i>jildi</i> . | Straw— <i>bicháh</i> . |
| Quiet— <i>choop</i> . | Strong— <i>muzboot</i> . |
| Quiet <i>v.</i> (be)— <i>choop raho</i> . | Sun— <i>sooruj, dhoop</i> . |
| Rain— <i>bursát, pani</i> . | Tail— <i>doomb</i> . |
| Raise— <i>ootháo</i> . | Tank— <i>tulláo, pokhra, jheel</i> . |
| Red— <i>jál</i> . | Ten— <i>dus</i> . |
| Remember— <i>yád kurro</i> . | Tent— <i>tumboo, déra</i> . |
| Return (<i>here</i>)— <i>wápus áo</i> . | Thin— <i>puila, doobla</i> . |
| Return (<i>there</i>)— <i>wápus jáo</i> . | Thirty— <i>tees</i> . |
| Rifle— <i>rufful</i> . | Thorn— <i>kánta</i> . |
| Right hand— <i>dainé háh</i> . | Three— <i>teen</i> . |
| River— <i>nuddi</i> . | Throat— <i>gulla</i> . |
| Road— <i>rusta</i> . | Tie <i>v.</i> — <i>bándho</i> . |
| Roads (junction of)— <i>chow-rusta</i> . | Tobacco— <i>tumbákoo</i> . |
| Rope— <i>russi</i> . | To-day— <i>ájh</i> . |
| Rotten— <i>surra</i> . | To-morrow— <i>kul</i> . |
| Run <i>v.</i> — <i>dowro</i> . | Tracks— <i>punja</i> (<i>carnivora</i>); <i>khój</i> (<i>deer, pig, etc.</i>) |
| Rupees— <i>roopiya</i> . | Tree— <i>pér, jhárh</i> . |
| Salt— <i>nemuk</i> . | True— <i>such</i> . |
| Search <i>v.</i> — <i>dhoono</i> . | Twenty— <i>beese</i> . |
| See <i>v.</i> — <i>dékh</i> . | Two— <i>dō</i> . |
| Seven— <i>sát</i> . | Under— <i>necché</i> . |
| Seventy— <i>suttur</i> . | Untrue— <i>jhoot</i> . |
| Shoes— <i>jooti</i> . | Vulture— <i>geedh</i> . |
| Shoot <i>v.</i> — <i>máro</i> . | Wait— <i>thairo</i> . |
| Short— <i>chóta</i> . | Water— <i>páni</i> . |
| Shot (pellets)— <i>churra</i> . | Weak— <i>kumsör</i> . |
| Six— <i>chhé</i> . | When— <i>kub</i> . |
| Sixty— <i>sát</i> . | White— <i>saféd</i> . |
| Skin <i>n.</i> — <i>chumra, khál</i> . | Wild— <i>jungli</i> . |
| Skin <i>v.</i> — <i>khulliáo</i> . | Wind <i>n.</i> — <i>howa</i> . |
| Smell <i>n.</i> — <i>bás, bud bo</i> . | Wine— <i>shuráb</i> . |
| Smoke— <i>dhooa</i> . | Wound <i>n.</i> — <i>chöt</i> . |
| Snake— <i>sánf</i> . | Yellow— <i>peela</i> . |
| Soft— <i>mooleam</i> . | Yes— <i>há</i> (<i>nasal</i>). |
| Sport— <i>shikár</i> . | Yesterday— <i>kul</i> . |
| Stick <i>n.</i> — <i>lukri</i> . | Young— <i>buchha</i> . |
| Stone— <i>putthur</i> . | Your— <i>toomára</i> . |

N. B.—Hindustani should see a sportsman through in most of the jungle tracts of India.

A SUPPLEMENT

Romances of the Jungle

FOUNDED ON SUPERSTITIONS AND STORIES
NARRATED BY DIFFERENT NATIVE SHIKARIS.

THE STEED OF THE FOREST GOD.

A-oongh, A-oongh. The deep and thrilling sounds carried far down the dark and forbidding gorge, and the echoes reverberated through the surrounding jungle-covered hills. The big lame tiger of Torai-ama was on his prowl, and making for the thinner jungles that bordered the cultivation of Deopura, a small forest-surrounded hamlet of Gurmpore, one of the districts of Central India.

"Ho! Sündri," said Rawan Gond, the village shikari, to his wife. "The Deo of the forest is out to-night on his steed, and is making for Gangori in hopes of finding some poor belated bullock having a few mouthfuls of grass in the clearing. It is long since Maharaj* visited the clearing."

"Yes, I hear his voice. Our two bullocks and the big buffalo, thank goodness, are safe in their sheds."

"It is long past midnight," continued Rawan, "and I wonder if the Engineer Saheb in the bungalow is awake and has heard the sound. It must be pleasant music to his ears, for I know he would give anything to get another chance at Maharaj. Last year, the Deo protected him, otherwise he would not have escaped the Saheb's bullet. That Pultanwallah Saheb (Army Officer) missed him in a miraculous fashion, though I have seen the Saheb shoot straight enough when after other tigers. I fired at him once myself at only ten yards distance on a bright moonlight night, but, as I told you, instead of killing Maharaj, I found I had only shot a sambar doe, which the Deo changed him into as I pulled trigger. Well, let us see what

*A term signifying royalty and frequently applied to any noted tiger of a locality.

luck the Saheb has this time. He shoots well, and scoffs at our tales of the Deos and Shaitans* of our jungles."

A-oongh. O-o-o-n-o-o-n. The sounds were appreciably closer, and in a lower and a more modulated tone, as though the animal, from whom the sounds proceeded, knew he was approaching the confines of the forest and the vicinity of the dwellings of the hated human beings. A startled sambar, that had been grazing on the outskirts of the village cultivation on the young and sprouting wheat, gave its deep and brassy call of alarm and, with a stamp of its forefoot, as it detected a long dark shadow gliding in and out amongst the bushes, rattled off to safer quarters.

Though the hour was late, the little forest bungalow on the top of some rising ground above the village showed signs of life in it. Brown, who had found the night rather sultry and warm, had not yet closed his eyes, and had been reading, when the deep and impressive calls of a tiger on the prowl caught his ear. He listened for a time and, as the sounds approached closer, got out of bed and, going into the verandah, sat down in an easy chair, so as the better to hear the music of the jungles that so greatly appealed to him.

He could vividly picture the magnificent animal, as it quietly strolled down the narrow forest line; he could picture the large yellow eyes piercing the surrounding darkness, as their owner now and then came to a stand on hearing a rustle in the thick undergrowth bordering the cleared path cut through it. He, even, saw it once stealthily crouch down with the grand massive head lowered, and the hind legs well tucked in under the body ready for the spring, which the large, expectant and cruel eyes showed was imminent. The eyes were turned towards a spot, only ten yards from the path, from where a small sound denoting the presence of an animal feeding unsuspiciously on a clump of green bamboos proceeded. A

* Gods and devils.

rapid rush was on the point of coming off, when a loud bell of alarm, immediately followed by the crash of a large animal through the jungle, was heard by the stealthy stalker on the forest line. The grand old sambar stag escaped by the skin of his teeth; a faint taint in the air, just at the last moment, had reached his sensitive nostrils, and he clattered off, sending the loose rocks and stones rattling down the hillside up which he rushed. A surly and disgruntled growl from the forest line told him he had only just been in time.

In his mind's eye, Brown followed the old tiger down the forest line; saw him sit down for over half an hour at a particular spot, and, after a roll in the soft dust that encroached on to the grass-covered walk, saw him get up, and, with the formidable claws of his hind feet, scratch up a tuft of grass; and then saw him resume his walk.

Brown was conversant with every nook and corner of this block of forest. He had spent a full fortnight there the year before, trying in vain to circumvent and lay low this very animal, but had only ended by muffing the whole business. The animal that had been driven out in front of him, and which he had dropped with a shot in the neck, had turned out to be only a small tigress. There had, however, been no questioning the identity of the grand beast that had almost immediately after the shot rushed out and got past him with a great roar, without giving him a ghost of a chance to fire. He knew now that two tigers had been in the beat, and that Maharaj, the cunning old fellow of Torai-ama, had thrust the young tigress along to scout and face the clearing he himself was suspicious of. That night, the wary old brute had made for safer and less disturbed jungles, and not returned till Brown had left the place.

Brown sat on, and followed Maharaj by the sound of the low moaning whine, he gave out occasionally, along the cattle path that skirted the Deopura cultivation and passed through the fringe of the jungle, right along, and finally up and over the low hill that lay between the village and Gangori, the grazing grounds of the village herds.

"I wonder if the brute will pick up a bullock or cow to-night in Gangori? These cowherds are such lazy and

irresponsible people," Brown said to himself, as he went inside and tumbled into bed.

"Well, Rawan? What news have you this morning? Did you hear Maharaj calling in the night?" Brown asked the Gond shikari as he turned up at the bungalow, early the next morning.

"Yes, Huzur. Rawan heard Maharaj. The Deo of the jungle was riding on his head, and guided him towards Gangori in hopes of getting his steed a feed there. It is a long time since Maharaj killed at Gangori, and these foolish herdsmen have become slack lately. Old Ramdin, who mends our sandals, has just told me that his black bullock did not come in last night with the herd. It is possible Maharaj has killed him, and I have come to ask if you would like to go with me in search of the bullock. Ramdin is too lazy to go out himself. He will only sit in his house and bewail its loss."

Brown signified his willingness to go, and thought it would be a great stroke of luck if it turned out that Maharaj had actually killed, as it would save him all the trouble of tying out fresh baits for the beast. A tigress was known to be inhabiting some heavy jungle on one of the neighbouring hills, whilst Maharaj was reported to pay only an occasional visit to these forests, being at present fonder of some heavy grass jungles about ten miles away, where some Goojars* had rented the grazing for their large herds of buffaloes. Maharaj was said to be in clover there, and disinclined to move away from a spot where he could always rely on a glorious feed, two or three times every month. Buffaloes were lumbering and stolid animals, and Maharaj helped himself to one whenever it suited him.

Even tigers, Brown knew, had to move on at times when their natural prey got too wary, or the herdsmen's patience was exhausted and they drew in their buffaloes to

*A caste of Indians who possess large herds of buffaloes, and earn their livelihood by the sale of milk and butter.

safer feeding grounds. Probably, Maharaj had been too exacting of late, and, finding his supply of buffalo beef cut off, had come on to look up his old hunting grounds of Gangori.

Telling Rawan he was ready to start out, Brown strode on ahead. Passing through the village, he was repeatedly asked if he had heard the voice of Maharaj the previous night. Ramnath, the Patel,* stopped Brown and told him that he could have as many men as he desired to beat for the tiger. "Maharaj bears a charmed life, however, and Your Honour will only waste your time and money in trying to shoot him. I know of a solitary Baiga hermit, whose home is twenty miles from here, and who will for a consideration by the aid of charms blind the eyes of the Deo, who after all is the guiding spirit of Maharaj."

"No, Patelji, I have no need for the Baiga and his charms. Maharaj is only an ordinary tiger, though possibly a very educated and cunning beast, and will meet his end in the usual way at the hands of some sportsman or Indian shikari."

"Pardon my disagreeing with you, Huzur," said the Patel, in a manner suggestive of being well up in the subject under discussion. "Maharaj is a very different animal to those that are shot every now and again in these jungles. We have known him for the last eight years, and, in spite of the many bullets fired at him, he still lives on. He assumes whatever shape he likes, and if the shikari's bullet speeds true, only a pig or a sambar or some other unfortunate animal meets the gaze of the disappointed man, whilst the spirit of the tiger, carefully shepherded by the Deo, is wafted away to reassume its own form at some other spot. How often has Maharaj been seen sitting on the cattle paths in the dusk of the evening, waiting for the herds as they returned from their grazing; all who have seen him say, his head is enshrouded in a

* Village headman.

white mist, from which his large eyes glow like fire. This mist is nothing but the Deo of the jungle, seated on the head of the beast and driving him to deeds unheard of in connection with other tigers."

"Well, Patelji, I have a long walk before me. Some other time I shall listen to your wonderful accounts of Maharaj. I go to seek Ramdin's bullock, and you might warn the men of your village to be ready for a beat in case I find the animal has been killed. I shall be back in an hour's time."

Brown and Rawan, the shikari, made straight over the low hill for Gangori. They struck a narrow footpath that joined up with the cattle track along which Maharaj had been calling the previous night, and immediately Rawan pointed to the round and large footprints of a big male tiger, making in the direction of Gangori. The pug marks of the forefeet were normally shaped, but Rawan picked out and showed Brown a faint scratch in the soft dust, that gave one the impression that one of the hind feet of the animal dragged a little on the ground at each step it took.

"Maharaj has gone along this path, and if Ramdin's bullock has died it will be the work of the lame tiger," said the old tracker, who now took the lead, with his eyes closely studying the large pug marks.

They followed the tracks over the hill and down the opposite slope till it was lost in the sea of long grass that covered a flat plain, known as Gangori. They searched about in vain for any signs that might tell them of a "kill," and were on the point of turning their faces homeward, when the old shikari pointed to a solitary crow sitting on a tree that grew in a small grass-covered depression in the plain.

"Let us sit down and watch that bird. He is not there for nothing," said Rawan, and Brown fully concurred, as he pulled out a cigarette, and sat down for a quiet smoke. He noticed the bird showed a great disinclination to alight on the ground, though something below his perch

seemed to have a great attraction for him. Presently, he saw the crow fly off and return with a companion, who also showed a deal of excitement by hopping about amongst the branches of the tree and cawing loudly. A few dark specks were now noticed in the sky, making rapidly towards the tree in which the crows were still seated.

"The vultures have seen the 'kill,' Huzur, and we shall soon know if Maharaj is there or not. Oh! Saheb, it is as I thought—Maharaj is with his 'kill.' See, the big birds are too frightened to alight. What do you suggest?"

"Come on, Rawan, we shall not get such a chance again. I shall hurry round to that small clump of trees on his direct route to that thick cover on the hill. As soon as you think I have reached there, walk up, coughing loudly and even singing if you like, towards the tree on which the birds are seated; the tiger is sure to pass me as he makes for the hill, on hearing your voice. Leave the rest to me. Maharaj will find his protecting Deo has failed him at last."

"Very well, Huzur, we can but try, though I feel sure you will see nothing but a mangy hyæna or jackal. Spare not, as it will be Maharaj himself in some form or other, and though you will never shoot him as a tiger, it may be some satisfaction to know you are really firing at him as you pull trigger at the animal that passes you."

Brown cut short the conversation and hurried off to the clump of trees he had decided to take cover in, and took up his position behind a magnificent specimen of the wide-spreading goolar* tree, amongst whose enormous gnarled roots he found a secure hiding place. The clump of trees in which he found himself was really a coppice with only a few tall trees in it, and what grass grew there was only moderately high; but in place of the rank and high growth out on the plain, there were many stunted and thorny bushes around his position. However, the ground in his immediate vicinity was more like a park

* *Ficus indica*.

than a jungle, and he commanded quite a good view, especially towards his right, where the thorny bushes were further apart.

As he felt the barrels of his trusty Paradox in his hands, Brown experienced a feeling of thorough confidence, both in himself and his weapon—no animal that entered that little clump of trees could possibly get out of it alive. He anxiously awaited the shout of the shikari, that would warn him the game was afoot; there was no other lead to the heavy jungles on the hill at his back.

After a few minutes, he heard old Rawan's shout and gripping his rifle confidently, though experiencing a thrill of pleasurable excitement, he strained his eyes in every direction to catch the first glimpse of the beautiful striped coat he was expecting to see at any moment. A small troop of monkeys gave him the first warning that one of the carnivora species was on the move. Frantic leaps from bough to bough, accompanied with short coughing barks, showed that the monkeys resented the approach of some animal they both feared and hated. Brown watched these animals closely, and presently saw their demonstrations were directed against something immediately under the tree on which they were perched, and the suspense with which he closely watched the spot was quickly cut short by the sight of a magnificent tiger standing behind a bush, with only his head and neck showing.

It was Maharaj; of that there could be no doubt. He stood stock still for a few seconds, gazing intently with his large eyes at the jungle beyond; no suspicion of a human being's near presence seemed to disturb him, for he yawned lazily and passed his rough red tongue over his nose and lips. What was the Deo of the forest doing? Maharaj's fate was sealed. Brown calmly and quietly brought his Paradox to his shoulder, and, taking careful aim at a spot just behind the animal's ear, gently pressed the trigger.

Click! immediately followed by another click—Maharaj was gone in a single bound, and the bushes closed around the grand animal, and hid him from view the next second.

A very disgusted and disappointed man stood under the old goolar tree, and examined the rifle that had never before failed him.

"What ghastly luck!" muttered Brown to himself, as he opened the breech of his rifle, and extracting the cartridges examined them closely. "Misfires! I have not had one before out of the many shots I have fired from this rifle, and why should the first occur at this time, when I had the chance of a lifetime? Just my beastly luck; I had old Maharaj cold."

He was in anything but a good temper when Rawan came up, eager for news. The old shikari only shook his head, and looked very serious when he heard the full account of the affair. "There you are, Huzur. What else could you expect? Had it been any other beast, it would have been lying dead before us; but, as I say, Maharaj is not an ordinary tiger. Saheb, let us send for the Baiga the Patel was telling you about this morning. Tulshi will blind the Deo by his magic and charms, and Maharaj will fall to your rifle."

"Shut up with this foolish talk, Rawan. You and I are good enough shikaris to kill any tiger that roams these jungles without soliciting the aid of a dirty Baiga and his sham charms. It was simply my "*naseb*" (fate) that was bad to-day."

"Very well, Huzur, Rawan is your servant, and will do as you order him. But you know well even the best behaved of tigers—and every one knows Maharaj is amongst the number—will lose their tempers if pushed too far and find their lives are attempted. It will be a sorry time for us and the whole village should Maharaj ever lose his temper and turn on human beings. The Deo will lead him up to all kinds of mischief. The Maharaj is already lame, and very little irritation will turn him into a *man-eater*."

"Come on, Rawan, let us get back to the bungalow. On the way you may regale me with whatever stories you like about this famous tiger of yours."

"No, Saheb, I shall say no more," replied Rawan in an offended tone. "You will only scoff at what I could tell you of this tiger. The gun has not yet been made that can lay him low."

Brown was not sorry at being refused further startling tales about Maharaj, and trudged home in silence to his little bungalow. Arriving there, he gave Rawan the necessary funds to purchase a couple of young buffaloes, and ordered him to tie them out regularly every night as baits at spots most likely to be frequented by Maharaj during his nocturnal prowls. Rawan was also told that Brown would sit up that night on a *machan** built in the branches of a tree that overlooked the carcass of the black bullock, killed by the Maharaj the previous night. There was a chance, though only a forlorn one, of Maharaj revisiting his "kill" at or just before dusk.

"The night will be a dark one, but if Maharaj has not been totally frightened off by a sight of me lurking amongst the roots of the old goolar, there is just a chance of his putting in an appearance. You can sit with me Rawan, and when it is too dark for us to see any longer, we can get off and return home. Go at once and get the *machan* ready, and be as quiet as possible over the work in case the beast is hanging about in the neighbourhood."

Rawan salaamed and went off to carry out his orders, whilst Brown settled down to some office work and reading, to pass the time till the afternoon, when Rawan would return to call for him.

There were still two hours of daylight left, when the two men set out for their watch over the "kill." On reaching their destination both climbed into the neat little *machan* that the old shikari had so carefully erected and hidden around with foliage, and sat down to await developments.

The carcass of the black bullock lay within easy shot of the tree in which Brown and his companion were seated. It did not present a very pleasant spectacle as it lay with

* Platform of small sticks.

half its body already devoured, and a most nauseating smell emanating from it. Great gaping holes in the throat, made by formidable fangs, bore testimony to the violent end it had met with when at the Maharaj's mercy.

The old shikari had taken the precaution in the morning to completely cover the carcass with a formidable layer of thorny branches, which had effectively protected it from the scavenging vultures and crows, and which had, prior to the men ascending the tree, been removed and carefully hidden away at a distance. The remains of the bullock now lay invitingly exposed, should its rightful owner—Maharaj—desire to renew his feast.

An hour dragged slowly by, and nothing stirred in the vicinity of the "kill," but, just as dusk set in, the startled call of a spotted deer doe was heard at the foot of the hill behind the *machan*. Rawan gently nudged his master, and whispered "Maharaj comes." Both the men sat on, and yet there were no signs to indicate that any animal approached the "kill." Dusk had deepened into darkness, when a stealthy footstep was heard directly under the tree on which the men were seated. A low sighing grunt was next heard, and, immediately after, Brown, straining his eyes, was able to distinguish a low dark form moving cautiously towards the "kill." The light was too poor to allow of any sighting, so taking up his gun and judging as best he could, he put it to his shoulder and hurriedly pulled the trigger.

The shot was answered by a hoarse grunt, and a tell-tale gurgle soon assured Brown that one of the carnivora species had fallen mortally wounded, and lay breathing its last before his *machan*. It was too dark to clearly make out the object that lay beside the carcass of the black bullock, and it was therefore not surprising that Brown was greatly elated at so easily having bagged the famous Maharaj.

After a short time, during which there were no signs of life around the *machan*, the highly delighted sportsman turned to his companion, and asked, "Well, Rawan, what have you to say now? The great Maharaj has at last fallen. His protecting Deo was not able to save him to-night.

There he lies, stark and cold. Let us get down and examine him."

"Very well, Huzur; let us get down. It was certainly his tread that we heard under the tree, but that it is really he, lying out there, I am not so certain."

With a laugh, Brown descended from the tree, and being joined by his companion approached the fallen animal cautiously, his rifle ready for all emergencies. He struck a match, and feeble as the light was, it was sufficient to arrest any further examination. Words refused to come—he stood stock still and dumb with astonishment and disgust. Rawan's eyes had also taken in the object before them, and all the old shikari said was, "I thought so."

A magnificent panther lay dead before them—shot through the neck. It was a prize worth having, but to the disappointed Brown it only accentuated the bitterness of the long list of failures that had been his lot when pitting his wits against the instinctive cunning of this most lucky tiger. He felt the death of this panther was only a bitter mockery to his cherished hopes and well laid plans.

He cut short old Rawan, when the latter began to further expound on the marvellous perspicacity with which Maharaj would always be able to defeat their little attempts at circumventing him. It was no use, Brown felt, to attribute the panther's death to a mere coincidence, and he knew that anything he might say to that effect would not be accepted by the superstitious villagers. They would now add another wonderful tale, with appropriate embellishment and exaggeration, to those that already hung about this wonderful beast.

"Come on, Rawan, let us get home," he turned and said to the shikari. To his surprise he found the old man was bending down and touching each of the paws of the dead panther, and then raising his hand to his forehead as though in deep obeisance.

"What rubbish are you at now?" he asked angrily.

"Huzur, I am asking forgiveness of Maharaj, through the medium of this dead animal, for the attempt we have

just made on his life. Maharaj will be angry, and I fear his anger."

"Nonsense! Maharaj is miles away, and this sneaking panther only came on the scene by chance, and, being hungry and greedy, got shot."

"Very well, I am the Saheb's servant, and it is not for me to question what he says. Huzur, let us get away from here, the spirit of Maharaj, perhaps even in his natural form of a tiger, may be hovering around and do us a mischief."

It was a dark and dismal trudge to the bungalow, and when Brown arrived he ordered Rawan to return with lanterns and half a dozen men to Gangori and bring in the dead panther. He tumbled into bed, far from satisfied with himself or the results of his watch over the "kill." His long leave Home was to commence in another month, and his passage was already booked, and here was this beast of a tiger just as far from being bagged as ever it was. The days were slipping by, and he seemed no closer to bagging the one beast, he had now set his heart on getting.

For a time no news was heard of Maharaj, and though Brown was able to shoot a young tiger over one of the buffaloes put out for the big beast, yet he was far from content; it was Maharaj that he coveted and yearned for, and he, unfortunately, had left the neighbouring jungles immediately after the experience he had gone through, following his killing of the black bullock.

Though tigers are said not to be gifted with reasoning powers, yet it is very strange, that after every narrow escape their instinct never fails to tell them that an attempt has been made on their lives. The click, click of the Paradox, as it misfired, and the sight of the steady and eager eyes looking along the barrels, told Maharaj as plainly as words could, that he had had a very narrow escape. His inherent fear of man, together with a quick and instinctive knowledge that he was unconsciously in a trap, made a coward of him, and he bounded away. Other human beings, when come across, always showed signs of

fear at the meeting, but the eyes of the one behind the big roots of the old goolar tree were lit up with an unmistakable pleasure. The expression to be seen in the eyes of human beings is read like an open book by the wild inhabitants of the jungle, whilst not the slightest movement escapes their alert senses.

Altogether, Maharaj felt, it would be safer to avoid those jungles for a time, and cunning beast that he was he moved on as soon as darkness fell over the land. We shall not follow him in his wanderings for the next ten days. He went on to other and safer jungles, but after a "kill" or two there, we see him, one dark night, prowling leisurely towards the small grass-covered plain of Gangori.

As he sauntered down to the end of the narrow forest line and turned sharply to the left along a footpath, his large cruel eyes suddenly glinted with a lust for killing; for there alongside the path stood a young buffalo, staring hard at him. The animal was tethered to a stump, and could not break away—Rawan was no bungler at his work.

Maharaj quietly slunk into the dark undergrowth bordering the path, and making a short detour came out again within a few yards of the frightened animal. He gazed long and hard at the poor beast, and then, satisfied at last that there was no trap laid for him, made a quick and silent rush and buried his horrible fangs in its throat. There was hardly any struggle, for within a few seconds Maharaj rose and stood upright over his "kill." With a strong pull, he broke the tethering rope and dragged his victim off to a deep bamboo-clothed *nullah*, to devour at his leisure.

II

As the butler brought in his master's early morning cup of tea, he reported that Rawan had arrived and wanted to see "Master" on a matter of great importance—"Sah, I think Maharaj caught buffalo last night."

The news brought Brown hurriedly out of his bed, and, going into the verandah, he eagerly questioned the shikari, whom he found entertaining a crowd of servants



Gersappa Falls," 829 feet A beauty spot on the
Mysore Border

with some exciting news. "Gara hogya, Huzur,"* he was told by the shikari. "Maharaj has taken the bait I put out for him on the footpath leading towards the Gangori plain. He returned only last night from other jungles, so is likely to stop on here for a week at least. The 'kill' has been dragged into a small *nullah*, and Maharaj is in a regular death trap, from which only his protecting Deo can possibly save him."

"I hope there is no doubt that it is actually Maharaj who has killed," said Brown, "and not the tigress from the Karaunda hill?"

"Huzur, there is no doubt that the 'kill' is the work of Maharaj himself, for I have seen the drag of his left hind foot in the dust and mud on the path. He is now lying close to his 'kill,' and as there is some water in the *nullah* close by, there is no necessity at all for him to leave the spot during the next twenty-four hours."

"All right, Rawan, go to the Patel, and tell him to get together sixty to seventy men for the beat, and then go on yourself and get a small *machan* ready for me in the direction Maharaj will take towards the forest line, making for the hill. Do not let us beat him towards Gangori, as the jungle is thin in that direction."

"Vey well, Huzur, I go to carry out your orders, and shall return for Your Honour, a little before midday. Please see your rifle does not fail you this time."

On the old shikari's departure, Brown set to work to examine his battery, especially his Paradox and its ammunition. There was no fault to be found with either; the Paradox had behaved splendidly when he shot the young male tiger, scarcely a fortnight previously; it had done its work equally well with the panther he had just bagged. For all that, he could not account for the feeling of uncertainty that came over him, when he remembered that it had to be used against that cunning and exceptionally lucky brute—Maharaj. The orderly, an ex-sepoy from the Indian Army was summoned, and asked if he had cleaned

* "A 'kill' has occurred, Sir."

and oiled the weapons well since they were last used. Allah Bux assured his master that he had cleaned and oiled them thoroughly.

By the time Brown had finished his breakfast, Rawan returned to say all was ready and the beaters waiting. Quickly mounting his horse, Brown rode off with the old shikari following at his heels, in the direction of the patch of jungle in which the "kill" had occurred, and on arrival at the spot quite liked the look of the place chosen for the *machan*.

The tree on which the *machan* had been built was conveniently situated in a small natural clearing of the forest, and the grass around it, for a space of fifty yards, was low enough to permit of the sportsman in the *machan* getting a very fair view of any animal crossing the glade, and yet was high enough for a tiger not to shy off the clearing. After seeing the important business of putting up stops on either flank had been properly carried out, he climbed into the *machan*, fairly confident that Maharaj could not get through without giving him a good chance.

Rawan was now sent off to bring up the beat, and very soon made himself heard as he marshalled the men and started the line off, to drive the tiger towards the *machan*. Hardly a quarter of an hour had elapsed after the starting of the beat, when Brown caught sight of a fine tiger coming leisurely in his direction, winding its way in and out amongst the tree trunks of the forest in front of him. Due to the dense shade cast by the forest trees, there was hardly any undergrowth to impede the view, and he impatiently waited for the animal to approach within more effective range. Besides being a long shot, it would have been unsportsmanlike and rash to fire before it came in line with his *machan*, as a shot then would have sent the animal back on the beaters, when there was no knowing what damage he would not have done to the men who came in his way.

He kept his eyes glued on the beast, his finger ready on the trigger, and watched him come on. Presently, he lost

sight of the animal as it entered a small depression, but did not feel at all concerned as he felt it was only a matter of a few seconds, when he would reappear in the clearing and give him the shot he was yearning for.

The few seconds necessary for Maharaj to reach the clearing had long passed, and the keen and impatient man began to feel a bit anxious. "He has probably stopped to listen to the music of the beat, and will be out in a moment or two," he thought, trying to reassure himself. A full minute had now passed since his last sight of the beautiful striped coat. "Something is certainly wrong," he said to himself, as he sprang to his feet on the *machan* and looked about wildly in the direction the animal had been making for when last seen. At the same time there was a loud tapping noise made by the stop he had placed on his right. He could plainly see this man waving his arms about and pointing to the further edge of the clearing, away behind him. Casting his eyes in that direction, he saw a magnificent tiger jump out of a small overgrown *nullah* and make for the tree jungle at the other end of the glade with long bounds. It was a long and difficult shot, but yet if the chance was not to be lost it had to be taken at once. The bullet threw up the dust at the feet of the disappearing animal, which with a last bound and a twirl of its tail, as though in derision, safely reached the cover.

Rawan and the beaters came up in due course, the former unconcerned and apparently not hoping for much from the shot he had heard, the latter expectant, curious and inquisitive. Without answering any of the questions flung at him, Brown descended from his *machan*, and accompanied by the shikari proceeded to examine the depression of ground into which he had seen the tiger disappear, as it came leisurely towards him through the forest.

He blamed himself greatly, after an inspection of the spot, for not having put a couple of stops up trees on both sides of the narrow and overgrown *nullah*—practically only a ditch—into which this depression led. There was certainly a stop on the further side, but unfortunately the man had

quite underrated the depth and length of this *nullah*, and not grasped the possibility of a cunning and stealthy tiger being able to sneak along it, almost invisible in the long grass, till it had got past the line of the *machan*. At this spot the *nullah* ended abruptly, and any animal coming along it would have to emerge in full view of any one posted in the clearing.

This is exactly what actually happened, for the crafty Maharaj, not liking the look of the little clearing, had slipped into the *nullah* and followed its course till it came to an end, half way across the glade, when he attempted to

"But, Huzur, let us call in the Baiga to our aid. All Baigas are good shikaris, and this particular one, besides being a shikari, is gifted with wonderful and supernatural powers in dealing with the wild animals of the jungles. By the aid of his prayers and offerings to the forest gods, he is able to hold communion with the jungle spirits, and either invoke their aid or fool them by his charms. He it was that got the notorious man-eater shot, three years ago, by a Colonel Saheb that visited these jungles."

"Rawan, you are a foolish old fellow," retorted Brown, losing his temper. "If you like, you may send for the Baiga, as, though he certainly cannot do any good, he as surely cannot do any harm."

Brown thought deeply for a few minutes, and to ease his conscience at having consented to call in the prayers and magic of an impostor to aid him in his sport, argued with himself in this wise. "My shoot is nearly finished, and after all there is no harm done in trying this Baiga. The tribe are wonderfully expert in woodcraft, and if he can get me another and a last chance at Maharaj, it is all that I shall want. Rawan has stalled a bit, and it is always difficult to work with a shikari who from the very start thinks all that we can do is doomed to failure."

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Old Rawan had by now got to learn that any show of sympathy or consolation with his master after an adventure with Maharaj always drew forth a storm of anger on his head, so wisely kept his opinions to himself, and watched the wrath of his master turned on a luckless beater, who foolishly blurted out that Maharaj would never fall to any gun unless the Deo, who looked after him, was propitiated in some way or other.

"Ghastly luck again," thought Brown to himself, as he rode home, leaving Rawan to follow on with the beaters. "I have only another ten days left, after which I must return to headquarters to pack up and give over charge to my successor. My boat sails in three weeks time, and here I am, still no nearer bagging this beastly tiger than I was last year. The brute has the luck of the Old Man himself, whilst my own luck seems to be quite out. Will give him just these ten days; there is no knowing what luck will turn up."

The moonlight nights were now on, and two fresh buffaloes were purchased and put out every night, in case Maharaj strolled round again. Rawan reported that the tiger had left the jungle immediately after being fired at, but said, as he had been given a "kill" or two there, he felt pretty confident Maharaj would not stay away for long.

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"Huzur, Tulshi will be here by to-morrow evening, and it will be strange if he cannot get Maharaj shot by Your Honour before you leave."

The faithful Rawan left with a broad smile on his honest black face. He made straight for the village to see the Patel and break the good news that his master had at last consented to calling in the Baiga. Rawan was loyal to the core and a thoroughly competent shikari, and it is saying a lot for his staunchness in sticking to Brown and helping him in his attempts to shoot Maharaj, when it is remembered that this particular beast was held in great respect and awe by him and his fellow villagers. One and all feared reprisals at the hands of the Deo, if they succeeded in

getting Maharaj killed. No amount of talk or argument could shake their conviction that the jungle god used Maharaj as his steed, when roaming through the forests.

Other tigers, they had seen and helped to get shot, but after a futile attempt or two at circumventing the big lame tiger of their jungles, they carefully left him alone. He had never harmed any of them, and his goodwill towards men they felt was cheaply purchased by the loss of a bullock or cow which he helped himself to occasionally.

"Oh! Patelji," said Rawan, as he entered the courtyard of the village headman, "the Saheb has consented to our sending for Tulshi Baiga. Will you send two men off at once for him, so that he may arrive by to-morrow evening. I acknowledge myself beaten by Maharaj. Let us hope, Tulshi with his magic will get him slain by the Saheb."

"I am glad to hear wisdom has come to the Saheb at last," said the well meaning Patel. "I shall send two men off at once to fetch in the Baiga; but do you know exactly where Tulshi is to be found?"

"Yes. He is living the life of a hermit on the top of the Dipgarh hill, just six miles beyond the large plateau. Dipgarh is only eighteen miles from here, but it is a lonely spot, and Tulshi's only companions are the bison and big solitary sambar that roam those hills. The men that go for him will have to walk throughout the night to get him here in time."

It thus happened, that as Brown sat down to dinner the following night, his butler announced with a comical expression on his face that "Naked jungle man come to see Master. He says he got plenty magic to kill tiger." Brown told him to keep the man waiting and went on with his dinner, after which he strolled out into the verandah and made his first acquaintance with the famous Tulshi Baiga. Though he had resolved not to let first impressions influence him, yet he could not help but feel a presentiment that the dirty individual, he saw standing in front of him, would, for good or bad, affect his destiny.

Tulshi was a good specimen of his tribe, small but strongly built; very black and very dirty, with a great shock

of untidy black hair on his head, and an equally unkempt long beard reaching to his chest. All he possessed in the way of clothes was an extremely narrow strip of dirty cloth round his waist and passing between his legs. What he seemed to prize most was a small bag made out of monkey skin, and suspended from his neck, reaching down to his waist on one side. He carried a small axe with a slender bamboo shaft, hooked on to his shoulder by its head.

“So you are the great Tulshi Baiga I have heard so much about!” Brown began as a start. “Are you going to get me a shot at the famous tiger of these jungles?”

“Yes, Saheb,” answered Tulshi as he shifted about on his feet and showed a fine row of white teeth in a broad smile. “I shall get Maharaj shot by you. I have heard all about this tiger from the men who came for me, but rest assured, the Deo cannot save him once Tulshi Baiga has said that he shall die. I shall make him eat Your Honour’s bullets. But, Huzur, it will cost some money to prepare my charms and make appropriate offerings to the Deo.”

“Oh! I see! Very well, let me know what you require, and I shall let you have the necessary money. You may go on to the village now and find quarters with Rawan shikari, as you must be tired and hungry.”

“Saheb, Tulshi Baiga never tires, and seeks no roof over his head, except that of the trees of the forest. The closest pipal* tree to the bungalow will do for me to put up under, for I seek no village and its hustling crowd of people. I must be free of interruptions and inquisitive eyes when I prepare my magic for the outwitting of the cunning Maharaj and his still more cunning guardian and protector.”

Finding the Baiga showed no inclination for a rest, Brown sat down in a chair, and spent an interesting half hour in conversation with the wild aborigine of the forests, who squatted down on the steps of the verandah. In a very short time he was able to tell that the man was

* The *Ficus religiosa*.

thoroughly conversant with the habits and temperaments of every wild animal that roamed the jungle, and felt that he had got rather a treasure in his latest acquisition to his supporters against the redoubtable Maharaj.

Tulshi gave him the whole story of how, in these same jungles, he had got a man-eating tiger shot, that had defied, for many years, all attempts made by numerous shikaris, European and Indian, to bring him to book. The offerings and prayers he had been obliged to make in that affair had been very costly, but he added in this case he had no doubt that Maharaj would prove a much easier tiger than the famous man-eater to bring to bag, and therefore the price to be paid for his magic and offerings to the gods would be much less.

"Tell me exactly what you want," Brown said, "and I shall have the articles procured for you."

"A white goat, two bottles of strong arrack (native distilled liquor) and two cocoanuts is all that I require for the present," replied Tulshi, with a solemn and important air.

"Quite moderate," thought Brown to himself, as he rose and signified that the interview was at an end. Before leaving the verandah, he summoned his orderly, Allah Bux, and told him to procure and make over the goat, etc., to the Baiga, the next morning. Tulshi *salaamed*, and inquiring the direction of the nearest pipal tree, walked away.

After breakfast, next day, Allah Bux was called by his master and asked if he had made over to Tulshi the things he wanted. Brown was told that the Baiga was in possession of all he required. "But, Huzur," said the orderly, "Tulshi is a peculiar and particular man, for he refused a black goat that I had got for him, and said his "pujahs" * would be of no avail unless the goat were a white one. On my telling him that a white goat could not be procured locally, he demanded a white cock to sacrifice along with the black goat, saying the white bird would

* Worshippings.

counteract the bad effects of a wrongly coloured goat. I am a Mohammedan, Huzur, and look upon all this magic and humbug with loathing, but as Your Honour is so bent on shooting this Shaitan of a tiger, I thought you would not object to my giving him the bird, and so I got it for him. He has now gone off to the jungle with Rawan, and told me he would return and report to you this afternoon."

Telling his orderly that he had done right, and ordering him to produce Tulshi before him immediately on his return, Brown settled down to his English letters. His wife had to be advised as to his movements, and told of the exact date on which to expect him in dear old London. She had been away the last two years with the children, and had been begging of him to take his leave and go Home for even a few months. It was years since he had taken leave, and she felt that the climate must have taxed his strength a good bit, for the nature of his work demanded long and strenuous hours in the hot sun in unhealthy tracts out in the district. This was to be his last letter Home before sailing, and he was busy, engaged in giving his wife a picture of the wild Baiga, when Alla Bux entered to report that the very man had returned and was waiting outside.

"Well, Tulshi, what news have you for me?" Brown asked, as he went outside and saw his latest joined assistant standing out in the sun, with Rawan at his side.

"I have been out in the jungles, Huzur, with Rawan, to hunt for a suitable spot for offering up the goat and cock to the Deo who, I notice, has not been out lately on his steed. The jungles show no signs of Maharaj's fresh pug marks, but from old tracks I have been able to find a gorge, where, if the tiger is in the jungle at all, he will for a certainty be found lying up in the day-time, and from where, after a drink of water, he sets out on his nightly wanderings. I shall do my "jadu" (magic) right up in this gorge to-night, and shall induce the Deo to send for his steed the following night. If you are awake, Saheb, in the small hours of to-morrow night, you will hear the voice of Maharaj as he comes down the forest line for the

buffalo we shall tie out for him under the big "sagūn"** tree. He will kill just before daylight, and as he will not have time for a full feed before the dawn comes, he will return early the following evening to his "kill," which I shall secure in such a way that he will not be able to remove it. There will be a bright moon, and as the eyes of the Deo will be sleepy after the heavy drink of blood from the goat I shall offer up to him, you will have no trouble in shooting Maharaj from a *machan* in the big teak tree."

"This sounds like business, Tulshi; remember I have only a few nights left for shooting. Here are two rupees, go and have some food. But don't get too disgustingly drunk for your work."

As Tulshi went off with a satisfied smile on his face, Rawan sidled up to his master, and whispered, "Huzur, this Baiga is a wonderful man, and Maharaj is doomed. Even I, a great Gond shikari, am astounded to see how perfectly he reads the signs of the jungles and the game paths. Nothing of the jungle's life is hidden from this man. He has cleared a small space near the water of the Torai-ama gorge, and to-night I and two other Gonds go there with him to help in the sacrifices he is going to offer up to the Deo. Tulshi says, the Deo is only thirsty for blood, and as he will not require any of the flesh, we can bring back the goat and cock after killing them there!"

"So long as I get another and a last shot at Maharaj, I shall not mind whether the Deo eats the goat, or you and Tulshi have a grand feast. Return in the morning, and let me know how the 'pujah' and other ceremonies go off in the Torai-ama gorge."

III

It was rather late in the morning before Rawan turned up at the bungalow, and gave an account to his master of the doings of himself and Tulshi, the night before. It appeared from his account that the services of himself and two other Gonds had been requisitioned by the Baiga to

* Teak tree.



‘Prostrating himself before the stone, he slew the goat and cock’

carry his offerings at nightfall to the foot of the Torai-ama gorge. Here, in a small cleared space around a specimen of the sacred pipal tree, Tulshi and his companions came to a halt. From his little monkey skin bag, Tulshi produced a few egg-shaped black stones, which, after a mysterious pass or two in the air, accompanied by strange mutterings, he stood up against the roots of the tree. Fumbling in his bag, he next drew forth some red paste with which he anointed the stones, and, after prostrating himself full length before his altar, he stood up and announced that the Deo had accepted the offerings he had brought.

He now slew the goat and cock, and, catching the blood in a small gourd which he also produced from his bag, proceeded to wash the stones in the gruesome liquid, muttering mysterious "*mantras*"* all the time. Then standing up and holding the gourd full of blood towards the moon, he twice uttered the startled bell of a sambar and, immediately after, the queer grunting call of a buffalo calf. He seemed to listen for a time, as though awaiting a reply, but none was audible to his companions; only a deep and hushed silence seemed to reign throughout the dark jungle. After some further listening the Baiga circled the sacred tree, and then bending low poured the whole of the contents of the gourd over its roots and, catching up one of the bottles of liquor, sprinkled only a few drops of its precious contents over the same spot. This seemed to bring the ceremony to a close, for, turning to his companions, he beckoned them to come closer.

"The Deo has accepted my offerings, and has told me that he will send for Maharaj to-morrow night as I have promised he will find either a sambar or a buffalo waiting for him near the clearing of the village. The Saheb will have to shoot straight and make certain that Maharaj does not escape him this time, for the Deo tells me that if any harm is done to his steed and it escapes alive, he will make Maharaj take a heavy toll of human life from your village. The Deo is fully aware of the attempts that have been made

* Incantations.

on the life of his steed, so woe to your village, if Maharaj gets away wounded."

"Well, Huzur," said Rawan, "that is all that occurred in the gorge. After the 'pujah,' we shouldered the slaughtered goat and cock and came away, bringing with us the cocoanuts and liquor. There will be feasting and music in the village to-night; orders have gone forth for a big Gondi dance, and the masks and costumes are being prepared. The Patel has asked me to inquire if Your Honour would like to have the dance performed in the bungalow compound."

Brown thought for a few minutes, and then remembering what a monotonous and interminable an affair the last Gondi dance he witnessed turned out to be, answered "No, Rawan. Tell the Patel to have the 'tamasha'* at his own place to-night, but we shall have a grand one here, the night I bag Maharaj."

"I shall tell the Patel what Your Honour says. Tulshi, who is busy cooking, asked me to take him the rifle you will use against Maharaj, for he wants to do some 'Jadu' over it. I told him you would not consent to this, but he is obstinate, and says he must have it, otherwise he cannot guarantee how it will behave when used against Maharaj."

"You may go, Rawan. Tell Tulshi, short of letting him handle my rifles and guns, I shall deny him nothing. He cannot have the rifle. Let him produce the tiger and I shall attend to the rifle."

"I go to the village, Huzur, and will report to-morrow morning after my return from visiting the baits that are tied out for Maharaj. He will come back. The Deo has promised to send for him to-night."

After a few more words with Rawan, Brown dismissed him, and occupied himself with writing up some official reports that were due.

As dusk fell the sleepy little village of Deopura seemed to awaken into life. Drums were taken off their pegs from

* Entertainment.

the walls on which they had been hanging, and their owners could be heard tightening and tuning them up; the shrill voices of children, anticipating a grand "tamasha" were mingled with the deeper tones of the elders of the village, greeting one another in an unnecessary loud fashion. Presently there was a lull, and then could be heard the regulated clash of a pair of brass cymbals, the tapping of two sticks together and the deep boom of a large drum, which beat time for the young Gondi men and women as they danced their quaint forest dance, singing in low and not altogether unmusical tones.

The village lay close below the old forest bungalow, and Brown sat on for hours in the verandah drowsily listening and picturing the simple forest people enjoying themselves under the soft pale light of the moon, and surrounded by the dark encircling forest. During the intervals in the music, doubtless given up to deep draughts of the flowing cup sent round by the Patel to the musicians, and dancers, his thoughts turned to Home and all it meant. He acknowledged to himself that a change of scene and clime had become absolutely essential. The last hot weather had been a very trying one, and had left its mark on him; he felt he was doing neither himself nor his work justice. A change would set him up, and as his wife would return with him on the expiry of his leave he hoped, for her sake, he would be posted to a more lively and congenial station, though for his own part, he had no fault to find with his present one, where he could always depend on good shooting being thrown in with his work.

Finding the music, down at the village, at length begin to pall on him, he went inside and tumbled into bed, but just before dawn woke up to hear the quiet low call of a tiger, proceeding from the direction of the forest line. He listened carefully till it ceased altogether, when he began to wonder if Maharaj had come on the young buffalo tied out for him by Tulshi. Sleep now seemed impossible, and with the first glimmer of dawn, he was seated in the verandah in his dressing gown, waiting for his early morning cup of tea to be brought to him.

started out to inspect the bait that had been put out all night. He impatiently awaited the arrival of these men with news, and at the first glance he caught of the Baiga's face, as he came up the walk with Rawan, he knew a "kill" had occurred.

"Saheb," said Tulshi, as he walked up to the verandah of the house, "was I not right when I said the Deo would send Maharaj to our jungles last night? The buffalo has been killed, and to-night you will get a shot at the tiger. Very little of the carcass has been eaten, and Maharaj will return early to his 'kill' this evening. Huzur, allow me to have your rifle for just a few minutes to say some 'mantras' over it, down at the pipal tree."

"Hurry on and get the *machan* ready. You cannot have the rifle."

Tulshi went off with Rawan towards the village, muttering his disapproval of being refused his request, and Brown, mounting his pony, went off to inspect some works that were in progress in another direction.

Late in the afternoon the two shikaris returned to call for him, saying all was ready, and the Saheb should lose no time in getting into the *machan* they had prepared for him in a tree over the carcass of the slain buffalo. Getting to the spot where the "kill" had occurred, Brown was quite satisfied with the way the two men had arranged everything and climbed into the carefully screened platform, with Rawan as a companion. Tulshi asserted that he would have liked to have taken Rawan's place only for a nasty cough he was suffering from. After making a few passes with his hand over the carcass and touching his own forehead, as though making an obeisance to the dead animal, he slipped away quietly, leaving the two watchers to the hushed quietness of the encircling jungles.

It was nearly dusk as Tulshi left, and the two men settled themselves down to their silent vigil with hopes of its not being unduly prolonged. Dusk gave place presently to bright moonlight, and the little clearing in which the tiger's meal lay was lit up well, in contrast to the dark fringe of the surrounding trees. An hour passed, and then two, and yet there were no signs to show the expected guest was going to put in an appearance. The night-jars flitted about near the "kill," and the big horned owl flapped slowly past and settled on a big tree and hooted mournfully, and yet Maharaj tarried. All the inhabitants of the jungle had by now started on their nightly rounds; the spotted deer and sambar to make for their pet grazing, and the panther to prowl slowly towards the outskirts of the villages in hopes of picking up a straying cow or heifer, or even a foolish and unwary dog.

Nothing came near the clearing till at last a grey form was espied at the further end, standing still and looking closely at the tempting feast lying out in the clear moonlight. For a moment Brown's pulse gave indications of its owner's excitement, but as the indistinct grey shape came closer he knew the scavenger of the jungle, the cowardly striped hyæna, had found out the "kill" and arrived to investigate. Rawan was wide awake, and had also seen and recognized the new arrival, and, like his master, now began to think the rightful owner of the "kill" had somehow got a suspicion of their presence, earlier in the night, and slunk away. There was nothing for it, however, but to give Maharaj another hour or two before they gave up all hopes. The two men accordingly sat on and watched the little jungle scene enacted before them.

A guilty conscience was evidently troubling the hyæna, and before he helped himself to another's property, he felt a little preliminary scouting was necessary to safeguard against being caught red-handed by the rightful owner of the tempting feast. He trotted around the "kill" fully a dozen times, even entering the dark forest, before he eventually plucked up courage enough to start eating, and his one object appeared to be to swallow as much of the flesh as

he could in as short a time as possible. The occupants of the *machan* were highly amused at the searching looks he cast every now and again into the dark shadows around the clearing, and it was during one of these intervals in the feeding that they saw a great change suddenly come over the beast. He stood stock still for a second or two and then, after a hard stare into the shadow cast by a big bush, he spun round and scurried away.

It was hardly necessary for Rawan to give his companion a gentle and warning nudge, for Brown knew at once the moment they had been waiting for had at last arrived. A long dark form was quietly moving towards the dead buffalo. The guest had arrived. A few long and stealthy strides, and Maharaj was standing over his "kill."

"Now, or never, is my chance," thought Brown to himself as he slowly and deliberately raised his trusty rifle to his shoulder. The light was as good as he could have wished for, and drawing a bead on a spot just behind the ear of the grand massive head, he gently pressed the trigger. As the echo of the report, in the dark and silent forest died down, the grand beast was to be seen stretched out motionless. He had dropped like a stone, and a second shot seemed quite unnecessary. The famous Maharaj had had his last victim.

The two men sat still in their *machan* for yet awhile to make sure nothing would rob them of their success. But at length, turning to his companion, Brown asked him if he was not satisfied that at last the great Maharaj had fallen. "Rawan, you and your fellow villagers will have a grand feast to-morrow night as I promised you should, as soon as I had shot this beast. Let us get down, and go to the village to send men to carry him in."

"It is indeed as you say, Huzur, but as this *machan* is not very uncomfortable, we might as well spend the night here; there is nothing to be gained by returning to camp; Maharaj will keep till to-morrow."

"It is strange, Rawan," Brown replied, "to find you are frightened of the dark. What do you expect can harm us?"

"Well, Huzur, you say truly, there is nothing living that can harm us, and I am not frightened of the dark. But yet, I cannot say I have any relish for the idea of passing close by the dead Maharaj. You have certainly shot him, but I feel sure the Deo of the forest, who was not with him to-night, will miss his steed and come in search of it, and will do us some mischief if he can. Stay here to-night, Saheb."

"Bosh," was Brown's only comment, as he made his rifle over to Rawan and asked him to give him a helping hand down the tree. Rawan had no alternative but to obey, and, after seeing his master safely down, he descended himself.

With his rifle in his hand and Rawan following close at his heels, Brown approached the fallen Maharaj, and after gloating over his prize for a few seconds, he proceeded to give the animal a hard kick in the ribs—a sort of assurance that Maharaj, the hitherto unattainable prize, was really his.

There was a quick convulsive movement of the muscles of the mighty frame that lay stretched out on the ground, and its slayer was spellbound and mesmerised into an unaccountable inaction as he saw the fallen animal quickly rise to his feet. Some power seemed to stun his senses, and the rifle in his hand was forgotten, whilst he stared helplessly at the transformation that had so suddenly taken place. A hazy idea of hearing Rawan call out "Maro, Huzur," ("Shoot, Sir") was all he experienced. It was over in a second; Maharaj struck him down with a single blow of his heavy paw, and then turned on the luckless Rawan.

The kindly moon shone on as before, and only the wise old owl and the night-jars could see the tragedy that lay out there in the peaceful and quiet clearing. Maharaj had gone, and only two human figures were to be seen lying lifeless out there in the soft and pale moonlight.

IV.

There was a great commotion and hubbub at the bungalow and in the village, immediately following the report of Brown's rifle; the Patel was to be heard calling

for volunteers to go and bring back the Saheb and the tiger, should it have been killed. A dozen or so of men signified their readiness to go to the spot and began getting together the poles and ropes required to carry in the dead beast. It was in the midst of these preparations that Brown's faithful orderly arrived, ready to lead the party. "Come on, O Tulshi, and you lazy Gonds," he shouted. "Hurry up and let us bring in the Shaitan. The Saheb never misses, and your great Maharaj only waits to be carried in."

With lanterns and torches, a goodly number of villagers started for the scene. All were in light and merry mood, and many a joke was cracked at the expense of the hitherto respected and feared Maharaj. It was only when close to the spot that Alla Bux remarked to the Patel that it was strange the Saheb had not greeted their approach, as was his usual custom, with a welcome shout. He could surely see their lights and lanterns flashing in the darkness, and must know they were coming for him.

"Oh! Alla Bux," said Tulshi, the Baiga, "the Saheb is only having a little fun with us, and wants us to come on the fallen tiger and see how delighted we are at its death."

Alla Bux led the way to the edge of the clearing, and then, shielding his eyes from the light he carried, searched the open space thoroughly in hopes of being the first to see the famous Maharaj stretched out, motionless and dead. Young Ghasia Gond, however, with his sharp young eyes was the first to take in the details of the scene that lay before them, and in a frightened whisper disclosed what he saw. "Rawan and the Saheb are dead, and there they lie near the body of the dead buffalo."

The crowd of men huddled together closer, and only slowly grasped and took in the significance of what Ghasia said. In a compact body, led by Brown's orderly, they approached the two motionless figures, when Alla Bux, who knelt beside his master, whispered that the Saheb still lived, and ordered the men to lose no time in carrying him back to the bungalow. After the first glance, Rawan was pronounced to be beyond any human aid. Maharaj had completed his work, and the

spirit of the plucky and faithful shikari had fled long ere the tiger had finished with him.

“Jaldi, bhai, jaldi, (Quick, brothers, quick) get the stretcher made and carry the Saheb to the bungalow,” Alla Bux kept on calling to the men. “We must get him home, and I shall take him in a bullock cart as soon as it is light to Gurmpore, and make him over to the Doctor Saheb.”

There was no need for Alla Bux to hurry the men, for they worked with a will and soon had a couple of rough stretchers ready on which they placed both the Maharaj’s victims and bore them quickly to the village and the bungalow. Alla Bux and the Butler laid their unconscious master on his bed, and washed out his wounds as well as they were able, but could not help shuddering at the dreadful wounds to be seen on the side of his head where Maharaj’s heavy paw had fallen. Whilst they were at their work, their master recovered consciousness and begged of his two faithful attendants to desist from the washing of his wounds. “I am done for, Alla Bux. Time is precious. Get me a pencil and paper and give what I write to the Deputy Commissioner Saheb when you reach Gurmpore. He will forward it to my Memsaheb. Don’t weep, Alla Bux. It is only my “*kismet*,” (fate) as you Mohammedans say. Quick, bring me the paper and pencil.”

Alla Bux did as he was bidden, and with an effort the wounded and dying man wrote his short letter to the wife who, he knew, was looking out eagerly for him. These few lines are sacred and were meant for her alone. The only part of it that we shall allow our eyes to see was the last sentence. “Bear up, it is fated that my long delayed leave cannot come off; India and the jungles have claimed me.”

The next few months slipped by, and the European residents of Gurmpore had by now got over the shock with which they received the news of the death of one of their brother officers. No word had come in to the station about the doings of Maharaj till one day, about three months after the death of Brown, a deputation of villagers, headed by the Patel, came in with a petition to Wilson, the Deputy Commissioner, praying he would take some steps to rid

them of a man-eating tiger that was harassing their own and the neighbouring villages by carrying off men and women when they entered the jungles for fuel and grass.

The Patel went on to say that the man-eater was the same tiger that had killed "Brown Saheb," and was known and spoken of as the Maharaj throughout the large tract of country in which his depredations took place. The animal was reported to have been merely stunned and paralysed temporarily by Brown's bullet which, missing the fatal spot behind the ear, had merely grazed the back of the skull and cut a deep groove at its base. Maharaj, the Patel alleged, had not been heard of for a full fortnight after he was wounded, for he had left the jungles in which he had nearly met his end, and had evidently gone off to the forest on the Dipgarh plateau, as his first human victim had been Tulshi, the Baiga. Some villagers had gone to interview the hermit for a charm against an epidemic that had broken out amongst their cattle, when they came across the remains of Tulshi, lying out in the jungle close to his hut. The greater part of the body was noticed to have been devoured by a tiger, and, looking around for tracks, the footmarks of the big lame tiger of the Torai-ama Gorge was easily discernible in the soft earth near the corpse.

Tulshi was reported to have informed the Deopura villagers before he departed for his home, that he feared reprisals on the part of the Deo of the forest for his unsuccessful attempt to get Maharaj killed. He had told them that if the Saheb had only listened to him and allowed him to say his "mantras" over his rifle, Maharaj would not have escaped, and the villagers of Deopura would have been saved the terrible toll he felt sure the tiger would now demand of them.

"Huzur," said the Patel, "if something is not done quickly to rid us of this beast, the site of the village of Deopura will be swallowed up by the encircling jungles. Maharaj spares not, and hardly a week passes but some one or other of our community is snatched away by this fiend of a tiger. No one feels safe any longer, and a great fear and dread have taken hold of all who yet remain. We are

powerless against this animal, and look to you to come to our assistance."

The Deputy Commissioner dismissed the deputation, telling them he would do what he could for them. He said he would offer a reward of five hundred rupees for the death of the animal, and he had no doubt that the proclamation of this reward would bring forward many shikaris eager to slay Maharaj.

Expressing their thanks and gratitude, the Patel and his party started on the return journey to their village. It was a long distance and would take them two, if not three, days, travelling on foot; it all depended whether they took the short cut over the hills and through the thick forests, or kept to the high road. The end of the first day's march saw the party at Shahpur, a large village on the main road, and the spot from where the short cut to Deopura started. The Patel was for keeping along the high road, but allowed himself to be persuaded into trying the short cut by the majority of the men who wished to reach their homes as early as possible. So the following evening we see these Deopura folk tramping along a narrow track through the heart of the jungles in their endeavour to reach their homes before nightfall.

There were six men altogether in the party, and they were stepping out well, Indian file, led by wiry old Sewa, who every now and again exhorted his followers to hurry along. "It is getting dusk, brothers, and we have still three miles to go and have yet got the long dark strip of sal jungle to pass, where you remember poor young Muria was killed by him whose name I will not mention now. Keep close together, and never mind that thorn in your foot, Chirwai; we cannot stop for you to extract it."

The man addressed was a plucky young Gond, who brought up the rear of the party, and had been suffering for a good part of the way with a broken thorn in the ball of his foot. and he now begged of the Patel to stop by him for a few minutes whilst he tried to extract it. "I really must get this thorn out, Patelji; just stand by me for a few moments whilst I sit down to get it out." The others of

the party walked on slowly whilst the two men stopped behind and got busy with Chirwai's foot.

The thorn proved troublesome, and Sewa was just turning the corner of a long straight stretch of the narrow path, when hearing a yell of abject terror he looked back in time to observe the Patel running towards him, and saw a big tiger dragging a human form into the dense jungle that bordered the path. The awe that Maharaj had instilled in these simple and defenceless villagers made cowards of them, and with hardly another thought for their unfortunate companion or glance back, the whole party fled along the path till Deopura hove in sight. It was only when the cultivation of the village was reached that the panic-stricken men halted in their flight, and began to discuss the awful tragedy they had just witnessed. Not a man of them suggested for a moment their returning to the spot.

"We cannot help Chirwai," said the Patel. "He is dead long ere this, and it would be foolish our going to seek for him in the dark. The Shaitan was hiding in a bush close by, and we knew nothing of his presence till, with a quick and silent rush, he launched himself on Chirwai's back. He is the size of a house, and his wicked yellow eyes paralyse one through fear. Poor Chirwai did not utter a sound; he simply collapsed under the weight of the beast, and I was spellbound as I watched the Shaitan give him a horrible crunch at the back of the neck; then I fled. I shall no longer live in this village if the Shaitan continues to haunt our jungles."

The men went on, and presently a great weeping and wailing was to be heard in Deopura as the news spread around. Sorrow, however, was by now rather a frequent visitor to the households of this and the surrounding villages, as Maharaj had been very exacting of late. Chirwai was left to his fate, and formed a gruesome meal for his slayer.

"Tell me," said the Patel to his wife, as the shock of the ghastly incident subsided a bit, "has Maharaj been busy here whilst I was away at Gurmpore?"

"No. Deopura has been left in peace, but a Baiga woman of the small hamlet at the foot of the Mahewa

Gorge, eight miles from here, was carried off at dusk, only three days ago."

"The Deputy Commissioner Saheb has offered a reward of five hundred rupees to the slayer of Maharaj. Let us see if this will bring any good shikaris to our assistance. If none turn up in a month's time, we must pack up and move on to some other village. To stay here is impossible; I cannot shut out the sight of poor Chirwai being killed before my eyes. The Saheb cannot come himself before the cold weather sets in, and long before that time there will not be a man left in the village."

It was only a week after the above conversation took place that two native shikaris arrived from Gurmpore. Between them they possessed quite a serviceable double barrelled muzzle-loader, which each tried to keep in his own hands as much as possible, under the impression that it lent dignity and an air of importance to the one who happened to be carrying it. They inquired the way to the Patel's house, and arriving there the elder of the two, a tall and thin individual with a threadbare coat, cut after the style in favour with European sportsmen of those days, gained temporary possession of the weapon from his companion and swaggered into the courtyard of the house.

"Who are you? And what brings you here?" said the owner of the house, looking up from some writing that he happened to be engaged in.

"I am Jagdeo Singh from Gurmpore and have come here to shoot the man-eater for which a reward of five hundred rupees was proclaimed by beat of drum in the bazaars. My companion is named Saroop Singh, and has come along to help me. The Deputy Commissioner Saheb told us to call on you for any assistance we needed."

"You are both very welcome," said the Patel, "especially on the business that has brought you here. Please consider my house as your own whilst you stay with us."

"It is very kind of you to have us as your guests," Saroop Singh replied, and with a twinkle in his eye and a good natured smile added, "the meeting of Maharaj and

Jagdeo Singh, the unwelcome and the welcome guests will be quite an event in this village of yours."

The new-comers did not fare so badly as the Patel's guests, for he and the villagers refused them nothing. Sitting outside in the courtyard, two nights later, a crowd of villagers being present, the conversation turned to Maharaj and his exploits. "Maharaj is invulnerable," said old Sewa. "Remember how Brown Saheb could not outwit and kill him."

"Oh! Yes. And we also all remember how he avenged himself on all three of his principal would-be slayers. Tulshi Baiga warned us that he would kill any and all who tried to get him shot, and this prophecy has come true."

"But, friends, how is it that a tiger can know and remember those who try for his life?" questioned Jagdeo in a subdued and shaky tone.

"Why? The Deo of the forest tells him everything. Look. Brown Saheb was killed, Rawan was killed, and also two other shikaris who tried to shoot him on the other side of this jungle; in fact, all who have fired at but failed to kill him have paid the price of their attempts with their lives."

"Friend, Jagdeo," said Saroop Singh, "you have the first shot at Maharaj, and I shall see how you fare before I take up the gun against him."

This little joke evoked a laugh all round, but in the midst of this merriment a stalwart young Gond came rushing into the courtyard with terror depicted in every feature of his face.

"Ghasia has just been struck down by the Shaitan at the further end of our fields. My new black bullock had got loose and was feeding on the crop close by in the moonlight, and calling Ghasia to help me, we went to drive it in. The foolish animal gave us a lot of trouble and kept running on further till, to drive him in, we were obliged to skirt along the little Karwa *nullah*. We were shouting and running along the bank, when the Shaitan suddenly appeared, and caught and dragged Ghasia into the shelter of the

nullah. He is there now. Let us all go and bring away Ghasia's body."

When he could make himself heard, on the general uproar and excitement abating a little, the Patel turned to the new arrivals and asked them to lead the party of men who were starting out for the spot. "Bring along the gun, Jagdeo Singh, we might catch a glimpse of the beast feeding on Ghasia."

"Here you are, Jagdeo," said Saroop Singh, thrusting the gun into his friend's hand. "I shall carry the bag with the powder and bullets and shall follow close behind."

"No! No! Brother. You take the gun to-night. I have a wound on my foot and cannot walk more to-day."

A deal of precious time was lost over this little haggling between the two shikaris, but at length a strong party of men, with lights and torches and headed by the unwilling Saroop Singh, started for the scene of Ghasia's death. Signs of a drag were immediately found on the banks of the *nullah*, and the men followed on the tracks making as much noise as possible to frighten off the tiger, should it be lurking in the neighbourhood. Crossing the dry bed of the *nullah*, they eventually came on the mutilated corpse of the unlucky Ghasia. It presented a ghastly sight and lay on its face under a thick clump of bamboos; the greater portion of the lower limbs had already been devoured. The man-eater had slunk away on the approach of the large body of men, and all that Ghasia's fellow villagers could console themselves with, was the knowledge that the animal had been robbed of a full meal.

Ghasia's remains were carried to the village, and soon the sounds of loud wailing and weeping of women arose in the silence of the night. Just another victim of Maharaj; that was all. That unlucky shot of "Brown Saheb" had to be paid for dearly, as it had made a harmless beast into the most dreaded of the inhabitants of the Indian jungle—the feared and hated man-eating tiger.

That night, as the two Gurmpore shikaris retired to rest, Jagdeo said to his friend and companion, "Saroop, I do not like this business at all. I had no idea Maharaj was

such a terrible beast. I thought all we should have to do would be to spend a night or two in a high *machan* on some jungle path and shoot Maharaj as he came walking down it; the same as you and I did with that man-eating panther last year. This Maharaj is a regular Shaitan, both in cunning and deed, and my heart dries within me at the thought of trying for him in these dark and gloomy forests."

"Well, what do you suggest doing? You told Wilson Saheb that you would find no difficulty in killing this beast, and even sneered when the Saheb said he would send' me along with you. All this evening, except when we went to rescue that Gond youth, you have hugged the gun, and have not given me a chance of showing these villagers how nicely I can hold and shoulder a gun. No. I am afraid you cannot retreat now."

"Do not be spiteful, friend, let us make up some excuse for returning to Gurmpore. I shall certainly not stop here another day. You may stop if you like, and keep the gun with you. I suggest that we give out that by some mistake you bought very inferior gunpowder, and that we must return for more to Gurmpore."

"So long as you say you, and not I, bought the bad powder, I have no objection to returning," said Saroop Singh.

"Very well, have it as you will. So long as we clear out of this dreadful tiger-haunted spot, I don't care what I say."

The following morning the two shikaris might have been seen retracing their steps to Gurmpore. Saroop Singh marched ahead, proudly shouldering the gun; it is hardly necessary to say, Deopura never saw them again.

Other shikaris came and went; some making genuine attempts to bring Maharaj to book, and others behaving no better than the two Gurmpore men. It was all to no purpose. Maharaj lived on, and still claimed his victims in spite of all endeavours to kill him. He was extra wary and cunning by now, and no one knew where or when the dreaded man-eater would be next heard of. Matters went

from bad to worse with the inhabitants of the large tract of country he looked upon as his hunting ground.

The Patel of Deopura made up his mind to clear out to safer parts, and put no faith in the last shikari that had arrived to try conclusions with Maharaj. "How was it possible that an aged and lean Mussalman with a single-barrel gun could prevail against Maharaj, when scores of better men had failed?" thought the dejected Patel to himself. Anyway, he did not refuse to impart all he knew of the tiger's doings and reported runs to old Wazir Khan, when questioned closely by the latter.

"Patelji, have a little faith in me," pleaded the old man, as he sat one evening in the headman's house. "A cunning beast like Maharaj is not killed in a day. It will take time; but believe me, ere the new moon shines on Deopura, Maharaj will be no more. I am not sitting idle as you think. I risk my life every evening, for I mean to earn the five hundred rupees offered by the Sarkar (Government) for the killing of this tiger."

Saying this, the old man left the house, and seeing evening was setting in and all the folk had come in from the fields, shouldered his gun and set off for the forest line, which was still a favourite prowl of Maharaj. On reaching the broad forest line, he made for the spot from which the narrow footpath to the Gangori plain branched off. Fifty yards down this narrow path he stopped, and began to prepare a gun-trap for the man-eater by tying his loaded and ready cocked gun horizontally at a height of two and a half feet from the ground to a couple of stumps. The muzzle was pointed straight across the narrow footpath, and a strong piece of twine being first attached to the trigger of the gun was taken across the path at a height of about two and a half feet and finally tied to a handy tree trunk. The trap was complete, and no animal could pass along that path without striking against the taut string and firing the weapon. This trap he had set regularly the last few nights, and remembering all he had learnt from the villagers about Maharaj's movements when in this stretch of jungle, he

knew it was only a matter of time before the dreaded man-eater came along that path and destroyed himself.

He hurried over his work, and put the finishing touches to all by concealing, in as natural a manner as possible, the twine with a few pendant leaves. He hastened back to the village, confident that his patience would be rewarded some night, sooner or later, by hearing the report of his gun, which he felt sure would do its work thoroughly by lodging its contents in either the head or neck of the unlucky animal that hit the concealed string.

Old Wazir Khan was very hopeful that night, as early in the morning one of the villagers had informed him that a party of men had come on the tracks of the man-eater, not far from Deopura, and that the pug marks pointed towards that village. The old fellow on his return from the forest walked over to the Patel's house, and as he had a presentiment that his little plan would be crowned with success that very night, he did not hesitate to tell the Patel of how he hoped to encompass the end of the dreaded Maharaj.

The Patel was interested, but yet scoffed at the idea of Maharaj being so easily taken in. If the tiger failed to see through the trap, there was no likelihood of his protecting Deo being so blind. The Patel and old Wazir Khan discussed many other matters, and it was near midnight before the latter rose to take his leave. He had barely stepped into the village street, when the stillness of the night was rudely disturbed by the loud report of a gun in the direction of the forest line. The Patel heard it too, and going out in the street called to Wazir Khan that his trap had been sprung. "But take it from me, friend, it is not Maharaj that has sprung the trap; it can only be a panther or a hyæna that has strolled down the footpath."

"Allah only knows," Wazir Khan replied. "I have a strong suspicion, however, that Maharaj has fallen, and I shall visit the spot, even though alone, at the first streak of daylight."

The inhabitants of Deopura were only just beginning to issue forth from their houses the next morning, when

Wazir Khan, with an activity they thought impossible in the old man, was seen running towards the village, and they thought he had gone daft when he could be heard shouting, "Maharaj is no more. Maharaj has fallen." The men crowded round him, and it was only when the Patel had appeared on the scene, that they were persuaded to give the old man a hearing, and though sceptical as to the truth of what he said, a few of the men decided to return with him to the spot where he asserted Maharaj lay dead.

The truth was soon out, for the dreaded man-eater was shortly after carried into the village. The old man's gun had done its work only too well, having lodged the bullet in the brain of the animal, and there Maharaj now lay stark and cold, to be reviled and spat at by the people he had held so long in abject subjection to his cruel and despotic rule. That it was the dreaded Maharaj there could be no doubt, for a deformity was noticed of his left hind leg, caused no doubt by an old bullet wound, the scar of which was to be seen just above the hock. There was hardly need to search for the wound inflicted by "Brown Saheb's" bullet, as at the first glance at the animal everyone present pointed to a large and long scar along the base of the skull, where a bullet had cut a deep groove and carried away a quantity of both the flesh and skin. All marvelled how Maharaj could have got over such a terrible wound.

News of the man-eater's death spread quickly in the neighbouring villages, and crowds came to look at the animal that had created such a reign of terror in that forest-clothed tract. Wazir Khan was feted and made much of by the grateful and simple folk, and to this day his praises are sung in Deopura and the surrounding hamlets.

THE MASCOT OF A GREAT TIGER SLAYER.

"Hullo ! Who is the funny old party you are trying to talk to ?"

"Oh ! Tom. I am so glad you have come to the rescue," said Mrs. Kennedy to her husband. "I do not understand a word the old woman is saying ; I expect, however, it is something of great importance to her, as she seems to be very upset."

Tom Kennedy, Superintendent of Police of Yellowpur, a small headquarters station of one of the districts of Central India, turned to the old Mohammedan woman, who with her head bowed to the ground at his wife's feet and with tears raining down her wrinkled old face had been importuning his wife for medicine, and asked her in a kindly tone to let him know what was troubling her.

"Huzur (Your Honour), my grandchild, a girl of twelve years of age, has been lying at death's door for the last two days with a severe attack of fever. She refuses all food, and the fever is burning her up before my eyes. The doctor babu has given me medicine for her, but Your Honour knows well that for such as us medicine from the Government hospital is nothing but water. The child is dying, but fortunately I was just told the saheb's tents had arrived here, and I have run over to beg a little real and good medicine from you. I know the English Saheb-Log (gentlemen) never refuse to help us poor folk. Save my child's life Huzur, and the good Allah will reward you, and a poor old woman will ever bless and pray for your's and your beautiful lady's long life and happiness."

After making a few necessary inquiries as to the symptoms of the girl's sickness, the Kennedys were easily able to diagnose it as a severe attack of malaria, accompanied with ague, that was troubling the old woman's grandchild. From their well stocked camp medicine chest they were soon able to get together the diaphoretics and

quinine required, and making them over to the old woman with instructions to return the next day and report the child's progress, dismissed her.

It was early November, and Tom Kennedy, like the rest of the officers of his service, was out on his long winter tour of inspection of the different police stations in his charge. Camp life during the winter months was one long picnic, and the freshness of the days was the more enjoyable after the long sultry Indian summer. Work was, however, never neglected, for besides the inspection of his subordinates' activities and work, the Superintendent was expected to make himself thoroughly conversant with the conditions prevailing throughout the district, especially with regard to the increase or otherwise of crime in the rural areas. There were many opportunities of sport during his tour, and as Yellowpur held some fine forests Kennedy came in for some good shooting.

His tents had that day moved on to the small village of Hindupur, and were now pitched in a big grove of fine mango trees within sight of the village, in a broad cultivated valley, surrounded by some heavily wooded hills. These forests were said to hold bison and sambar, and not a few tiger and bear, and Kennedy hoped to have a little shooting during the week he would allow himself at that camp. Mrs. Kennedy entered into her husband's life and work wholeheartedly, and, like the wives of all English Officials in the country, accompanied her husband on his tours, which but for her cheering companionship would often have been lonely and tiresome in the extreme.

She never found time hang heavy on her hands; the servants had to be looked after and the usual household duties attended to. Neglect or carelessness in such trivial matters as the supply of milk, drinking water and the purchase of fruit in India has to be paid for dearly, and many a promising career has been cut short through enteric, cholera and other deadly diseases, simply through inattention to these little details.

The Sub-Inspector of the local police station had arranged for a tiger beat for the morning following his

superior officer's arrival at Hindupur, and held out hopes of a fine male tiger being bagged. This beast, the police subordinate said, had been living in the neighbouring jungles for some months, and exacting his toll regularly from the village herds of cattle. The services of Bairagi Gond, the most famous shikari of the locality, had been secured, and for a week, previous to the arrival of the Superintendent's camp, the tiger had been well fed with a couple of sleek buffalo calves, till at last he was reported to have taken up his permanent quarters in a small and conveniently detached patch of heavy sal forest.

The third "kill" by this animal was confidently expected that very night. Suitable preparations had already been made for the beat, which was arranged to take place about noon the following day, on news being brought in in the morning that the "kill" had actually occurred.

A "kill" was duly reported early the next morning by Bairagi Gond, who had been out to inspect the tethered animal, and Nur Khan, the pompous Police Inspector, beamed all over as he informed his superior officer that the tiger was as good as dead; all details with regard to the beat had been so thoroughly looked into and settled by him, that no loophole remained for the escape of the beast.

Tom Kennedy, though a not over-successful tiger slayer, was no novice at the game, and knew that there was many a slip "'twixt the cup and the lip," as far as tiger shooting was concerned, no tiger could be considered bagged until it lay stone dead before the sportsman.

Shortly before noon, accompanied by his wife, he rode out to the scene of the kill, and taking up their positions in a comfortably constructed *machan*, they ordered Nur Khan and Bairagi Gond to go round the patch of jungle and start the beat.

Before starting on this business, Nur Khan once again visited the stops he had placed up trees on either flank of his officer's *machan*, and, shaking his finger most seriously and gravely at each and all of them, vowed dire vengeance on the one who failed in his duty, and allowed

the tiger through, or did not cleverly turn it in the direction of the guns with a gentle cough or low tapping with his axe against the tree on which he was perched.

All looked promising, and the Kennedys shortly after heard Nur Khan's shot, which signalled the commencement of the beat and anxiously awaited the sight of the big cat, sneaking quietly up towards them, with the intention of getting to a thickly wooded hill, which lay a short distance behind their *machan*.

Nur Khan and Bairagi Gond had not spared themselves in their endeavour to make the beat an assured success, and though they had planned out every detail, they were not prepared to combat the element of luck, which plays so great a part in the life of the jungle and its inhabitants. Every sportsman in India, or for the matter of that throughout the world, knows and feels that the intervention of luck, either good or bad, is a factor that can never be ignored. Luck, when in his favour, is taken as a matter of course and soon forgotten, but when it has intervened to deprive him of a trophy or a coveted prize, it is always resented and borne in mind.

In this particular beat, luck happened to be on the side of the big cat, for, striking a lead of some heavy cover, he sneaked up to and had nearly passed one of the stops before he was detected. The stop happened to be only a youth, and was so taken aback and terrified by the sudden appearance of so formidable an animal at such close quarters, that his loud shout of terror, instead of turning the tiger, so frightened the animal that it rushed past the tree and out of the beat into the safe coverts on the hillside beyond.

Regrets and recriminations were in vain, and all Nur Khan's ravings and threats against the defaulting stop could not alter the unsatisfactory turn affairs had taken, or induce the beautiful animal to give them another chance. That tiger had gone, and during the following night he would probably put nothing less than twenty miles between himself and the scene of his fright.

There was nothing for it, but to return to camp, and Tom Kennedy was too good a sportsman to be disheartened or downcast at his want of success—Luck had beaten him that time, but yet he knew it would not be always so.

As they rode into camp, the old woman of the evening before, whose grandchild they had dosed with quinine, was to be seen seated under a tree near the tents. As the Kennedys dismounted from their horses, she approached and informed them that the child was better, and she now felt confident of its recovery. She was profuse in her thanks, and begged Kennedy to give her half an hour any time he had leisure, as she wished to tell him of a great secret she held, and which would affect his life greatly for good, if disclosed to him.

Tom Kennedy had put in the best part of twelve years in India, and in his intercourse with the natives of the country, during the performance of his duties, had come to learn that the mysteries of the East and its inhabitants were sometimes interesting enough for closer investigation, and were not all fraud, as pronounced by most Europeans. Though he did not expect anything very interesting to be disclosed by the old woman, yet he felt he could spare the time she craved for, and perhaps some good might come of it. His wife's curiosity to learn what the old woman had to say probably helped in a great measure his decision to give her a hearing. He accordingly ordered her to come to the camp that evening, and said he would listen to her secret.

Over their afternoon tea, the Kennedys, who had forgotten all about the old woman, were reminded of their appointment with her by an orderly, who entered and reported that an old Mohammedan woman had arrived, and was asking for an interview. Finishing their tea, they went outside their tent, and, seated in easy chairs, ordered the woman to be brought before them. On her appearance, she was told to sit down on a small mat spread for her on the ground, and to start with all she had to say.

"Huzur, I am an old and lonely woman, who has lived in this village of Hindupur ever since my husband

brought me here as his wife over fifty years ago. There are very few of my caste and religion in this village, which as its name implies is inhabited almost entirely by Hindus. My husband, Ashraf Khan, owned a fair quantity of land, and we were comfortably off till Allah, for some reason best known to Himself, instilled in him a great love for shooting, after which he began to neglect his cultivation, and was always out in the forests with his gun. How he came to have this great keenness for shooting, I will relate to you.

"About ten years after I came to this village, a Shaitan (devil) of a tiger took up his abode in that heavy forest you see behind us. There are, and always have been, many tigers in these jungles, as Your Honour knows, but this Shaitan took to man-eating, and it was not long before every household in this village mourned the loss of one or more of its members—carried off and devoured by this savage and cunning beast.

"In those days, Huzur, Hindupur was not as accessible as it is now, and very few indeed were the visits paid it by English Sahebs, who, after all, are the only men who dare face, and try and kill man-eating tigers. The Shaitan, I am talking about, made life in Hindupur well-nigh impossible, and all the inhabitants were thinking of deserting the village, when my husband, who was a young man in those days and came of a plucky race of Pathans, decided to try and rid the villagers of their relentless persecutor.

"Rambux Singh, the Hindu Sub-Inspector of Police, owned the only gun the village boasted of in those days, and he was too nervous and careful a man to try conclusions with the dreaded man-eater. This gun, Rambux Singh was quite willing to lend to my husband, and he also procured a very aged and lean buffalo bull, that was past all work, from a fellow villager, and made it over to my husband to tie out as a bait for the tiger.

"This buffalo was tied out with a strong rope just within the fringe of the jungle bordering our village cultivation, and on the third night was picked up and

killed by the Shaitan, as he prowled around in search of a human victim. In the morning it was found to be half devoured, and what remained of it was still tied by the foreleg to the sapling, to which, when alive, it had been tethered.

“ Well, Huzur, my husband sat up with an old Gond shikari that night in the branches of a tree overlooking the carcass, and shot the animal a couple of hours after dusk had set in, as it returned to resume its feed. Needless to say, there were great rejoicings on the death of this man-eater, and my husband’s head was turned by the great fuss his fellow villagers made over him. The skin of the tiger was taken into Yellowpur by him, and he was given a large reward by the Sarkar (Government).

“ Before sending in the skin to Yellowpur, my husband, acting on the advice of his Gond companion, who like the rest of his well-known superstitious race pinned his faith on various and mysterious rites and ceremonies, pulled out a solitary bristle from the tiger’s moustache, and kept it as a charm against all disaster and ill luck in the pursuit of dangerous animals. The charm to be effective, the Gond told him, must be kept in a quill, extracted from the wing of the great horned owl which inhabits our forests, and hoots in such a wise and mysterious way at night, as though holding communion with the gods and devils of the dark jungles. This quill with its contents would have to be carried on the person of its owner, and would protect him from any harm from the wild and savage animals he hunted. It would make him into a famous shikari, and his bullets would always speed true to their mark.

“ Saheb, there was a deal of truth in what that wise old Gond told my husband, as, from the day of the killing of that man-eating tiger, my husband became a great shikari, his fame spreading through the neighbouring forests and villages. He became the possessor of a good gun, and whenever any tiger became a pest to any village within a radius of fifty miles of Hindupur, a deputation of men would come in and beg of my husband to go to their

assistance and rid them of the troublesome beast. This he never failed to do, both through sheer love of the adventure and for the sake of the pecuniary reward they offered him.

“Countless were the numbers of tiger and panther he slew, and his prowess and daring were sung of in many villages. He never failed to lay low the most cunning and savage of tigers, and there was no animal in the jungle that could do him any harm, so long as he wore the charm tied round his arm. He lived for many years, and would probably have been alive to-day, had he not forgotten to replace the charm on his arm one morning after his bath.

“A cowherd came running to our house that morning to say that a sleek heifer of his had just been struck down by a tigress, whilst grazing near a heavy clump of bamboo jungle within three hundred yards of our house. The cowherd said he had seen the tigress drag the heifer into the bamboos, and that he was certain she was in the cover at that moment, devouring her prey.

“My husband hastily put on some clothes, and, snatching up his gun, ran out with the cowherd towards the patch of jungle mentioned, in hopes of catching the tigress in it before she left it on completion of her meal.

“He had hardly gone out of sight, when I entered the room in which he had been bathing, and there, in a niche in the wall, I saw the quill containing the man-eater’s moustache, and I knew at once that in his haste he had forgotten to tie it on to his arm. Calling up my son, I made it over to him, telling him to run as fast as he could and give it to his father.

“The boy sped along the narrow path, but before he had covered half the distance, I heard the report of my husband’s gun, and a cold shiver of fear went through my frame, and I fell in a swoon in the verandah of our house.

“When I came to, I was lying on my bed, and I heard the noisy chatter of a large crowd of people around our house, and was told by one of the women who were attending me, that my husband had been badly mauled by the tigress, and had just been carried home on a stretcher,

and at that moment was being attended to by the local doctor babu.

"Huzur, is it any use my telling you of the inevitable end of any man who gets into the clutches of a tiger? Nothing could save him, and he only lingered for two days before he died. Just before the end he called up our only son, a youth of twenty years of age, and giving him his gun and the little charm, made him swear that he would never attempt to shoot dangerous animals unless he bore the horned owl's quill and its contents on some part of his person.

"Well, Huzur, my husband was taken from me, and my son seemed to be imbued with the same love for shooting as his father, and, like him, became a great shikari. Large numbers of tigers and panthers fell before his deadly aim, and there was no beast of the jungle that he could not circumvent and kill. His wife and I took care that he never ventured into the forest without the charm tied round his upper arm.

"Saheb, my son died a natural death in his bed; for what the most savage of tigers and panthers could not do, the curse of this part of the country, the dreaded fever, accomplished too well. He died, and without any son to carry on our line, leaving only a daughter, the girl whom Your Honour has treated so successfully, and whose life you have saved. She is my only companion, as my son's wife died of the same scourge as her husband soon after his death, and this little girl is the only bright light now of a poor old woman's house.

"You have saved her life, and by doing so, also my own. And, Huzur, the only token of gratitude I can give you is this little charm, which, now that there is no male member of the family left, can be of no use to me. You are a great shikari yourself, and believe me, the old woman's gift will help to double the number of tigers and other animals that will fall before your gun, and the fiercest of tigers will never face the wearer of this charm. But take a lesson from the fate of my husband and never be without it when you go out to shoot the fierce and dangerous

animals of the forest. May Allah bless you and your Memsaheb, and may happiness and good luck be yours to the end of your days.

"Huzur, scoff not at the little gift the old woman makes you. When the tale of the tigers slain by you is long, I feel sure you will attach to the little charm the value it deserves. Go your way, and shoot to your heart's content; the charm will always protect you."

With this, the old woman rose and, making a low salaam, hobbled off to her home in the village.

"Well, dear, what do you think of all this nonsense?" said Tom Kennedy to his wife. "I could ill spare this half hour, and might have devoted it to finishing off that report I have to send in on the Anantpur murder case. Here you are, take this peculiar looking affair, and either chuck it away or keep it as a souvenir. For my part I am very sceptical of its potency, and only accepted it to humour the old woman."

Tom Kennedy walked off to his office tent, whilst his wife quietly picked up and looked over the queer little gift. She somehow felt herself deeply attracted by it, with a strong and overwhelming presentiment that its possession would in some way or another affect her and her husband's destinies. She had no doubt that she could persuade her husband to carry it in his pocket when setting out after dangerous game, just to please her, if for no other reason. She carried it to her tent and locked it up carefully in her little jewel case.

That night, after dinner, Bairagi Gond, the shikari, was sent for, and Kennedy questioned him closely as to the prospects of further sport in the neighbouring jungles. He was able to learn that, besides the big tiger they had lost that day, there were a pair of tigers that inhabited some evergreen bush jungles along the banks of a small stream about two miles from camp. Panthers were reported to be fairly plentiful, and to prowl around the village at night in search of dogs and goats; some grand bull bison were to be had along the sides and tops of the hills, within

a few miles; whilst sambar and spotted deer could be picked up easily.

"If the Saheb wished it, he (Bairagi) would guarantee him a big bag. There was no animal in the forest, whose haunts and habits he was not thoroughly conversant with. Only the big tiger, which had escaped that day, was beyond his powers to put before the Huzur's gun. That animal was miles away by now, and would not return to the Hindupur jungles for at least a month, by which time he might be expected to have got over his fright."

Incidentally, Kennedy got to learn from the Gond that both the husband and the son of the old Mohammedan woman had been great and daring shikaris. Marvellous powers and wonderful pluck were attributed to them, and though Bairagi knew nothing of the existence of the charm they had worn, he said he was positive that both the men must have held some secret by which they could converse with the gods of the jungle, and so invoke their aid in their chase after the wild animals of the forest. Without such aid, no one was capable of the deeds they were said to have performed.

Telling Bairagi to arrange for a beat for a panther for the morrow in any likely patch of forest, Kennedy dismissed him, and joining his wife, told her all he had heard regarding the two Mohammedan shikaris, winding up by jokingly expressing a hope that he might be able to emulate their deeds, and attain the same success in sport. He was surprised to find his wife took the matter much more seriously, as she begged of him to carry along the little charm when he sallied out on the projected panther shoot next day. Good humouredly he acquiesced, and said the day's sport would soon convince her of its fraud, as it was likely to be a blank day. Panther, he knew, were notoriously difficult animals to bag in a beat, and should he return with one he promised to invariably carrying along the old woman's gift on future hunts.

As there was a deal of walking to be done Mrs. Kennedy did not go out with her husband next morning, fearing she might only hamper him in his sport.

She, however, took care to see that the quill with its contents was safely lodged in the breast pocket of his coat before he sallied out.

Just behind the camp was a small isolated and rocky hill with some low bush jungle along its slopes, and this Bairagi Gond decided to beat out, knowing it to be a sure find for a large panther that strolled around their village at night. He stationed himself alongside Kennedy, behind a pile of large rocks at the foot of the hill, and directed the beaters to keep close touch with one another and beat along both the sides and the top of the hill towards the spot in which he and Kennedy were placed.

The men were nearly up to the guns, and Kennedy was feeling pretty confident that the panther was not at home, when suddenly he felt a touch on his arm, and saw Bairagi Gond point out a panther, sneaking quietly away in some dense cover within twenty yards of his position. Throwing up his gun, he fired quickly, when the wounded animal, swerving round, caught sight of him for the first time, and charged in a determined manner with a nasty coughing grunt. Kennedy was on the point of giving it his second barrel, when it suddenly turned aside and, bounding past him into a small *nullah*, was lost to view immediately.

"Huzur, that animal is yours. He was full of fight when first hit, but as he came at you I saw the fierce look in his eyes change suddenly to one of abject fear, and he could not face you. He has no heart in him now, and you can easily finish him off. A panther whose heart once fails him can put up no fight, and will die like a coward. Let us go into the *nullah* and pull him out."

Kennedy had experience enough of wounded specimens of the feline species, and felt that by every rule of the game, the wounded beast should be given time before being followed up; but Bairagi's insistence left him no choice in the matter if he was to retain the man's respect. When the shikari volunteered to stand by him, he felt he could not lag behind, however dangerous the undertaking appeared.

"Come on, Bairagi. Let us see what we can do. Keep my spare rifle close at hand, and on no account give ground when we are charged, as I feel sure we shall be."

"Huzur, Bairagi Gond will never desert the saheb. That panther will not face you, and will die like a cur. I am a true forest Gond, and I know well how to read the emotions of rage or fear in the eyes of all animals. What I saw in that panther's eyes, as they met yours when he was charging you, tells me we have no more to fear harm from him than from the veriest pariah dog in my village."

Warning the rest of the men not to approach near the ravine, Kennedy entered it with the old shikari at his back. Drops of blood were soon noticed, and, as the two men progressed, searching every bush carefully with their eyes before approaching it, the blood trail was seen to get heavier, and soon could be followed without any difficulty. They were at last up against the opposite steep bank of the ravine, when they saw the tracks leading up and into a large excavation in the bank, about four feet from the bed of the *nullah*.

Bairagi called a halt within ten feet of this natural cave, and whispered to his companion that the wounded beast must be lying behind a low ledge at the entrance of the cave, and that they should throw a few stones into it before approaching closer to examine it.

Hardly had he picked up and thrown the first stone, than the infuriated face of the wounded panther was thrust over the ledge, and, with fangs bared and a wicked snarl, the animal prepared to launch itself at its enemies. There was just time for a very hurried shot by Kennedy to prevent the spring they expected. A cloud of dust and mud thrown up by the bullet within an inch of the beast's skull showed that the shot had been ineffective, and Kennedy braced himself up to meet the impetus of the expected charge, but to his great relief he saw the animal spring into the bed of the *nullah*, and then bound away into some thick cover, followed by a second and equally ineffective shot from the remaining barrel of his rifle.

After these few tense moments, a whispered consultation took place between the two men as to the next move in the game. Bairagi was for following up at once, and Kennedy, now no less keen for the hunt, was just as impatient to be in at the death as the old tracker.

"Huzur, I have never seen the like before. The animal had us at a disadvantage, and was conscious of it, but just as it made up its mind to charge home, I again saw the same expression of abject fear suddenly come into its eyes. Its liver turned to water at once, and you saw how anxious he became to avoid an encounter with us. Had I been leading, matters would have been different; he would have been on me at once, and I should now present a sorry spectacle. Saheb, come, let us go on. That animal is as good as dead."

Kennedy had no doubt in his mind, that they had just had a very narrow escape, as the odds were then certainly in favour of the wounded animal. This seemed a queer beast, and its conduct very different to that of other wounded specimens of his species. That a wounded panther is usually a most revengeful and dangerous beast to tackle, he knew well, hesitating even less than a wounded tiger to wreak its vengeance on those that molest it.

Anyway, he felt he must see this adventure through, and picking up the fresh blood tracks, he again started to follow up. The animal was soon come on again, and wounded afresh, but yet it put up no fight, only doing its best to get away. For a couple of hours, the two men hunted the wounded beast as though they were hunting only a harmless hare, till eventually Kennedy, getting an easy chance at the now thoroughly exhausted animal, put a bullet into its skull. It was a fine specimen of the larger variety of panther that inhabits heavy forests, and was in the prime of life. No one was more pleased than its slayer, when it at last lay dead before him. The cowardice, however, that it had displayed throughout the chase was most remarkable, and could not be accounted for by Kennedy or any of the forest men, who through constant contact with the wild animals of the forests

appraise correctly their temperaments and habits. With these forest folk the panther invariably bears a bad reputation of always resenting any molestation from human beings.

Tom Kennedy found his wife awaiting his return at the edge of the grove of trees in which they were camped, and she eagerly plied him with questions as to the day's doings, accepting without much emotion his description of the hunt and strange cowardice of the wounded animal.

"Don't laugh at my foolishness, dear; but I somehow felt no anxiety for your safety, knowing you carried the charm the old woman gave you. Before you received this charm, I always felt worried when I saw you start out for a wounded tiger or panther. Let me have it back, and I shall put it away carefully till your next outing. Own up now, do you not think there is something in it? You never expected to bag a panther to-day, and have you ever yet seen a wounded panther spare any man it had in its power? Anyhow, you must abide by your promise, and wear the charm whenever you go out after dangerous game in the future."

"Very well, dear, I shall carry that queer little package along with me in future when I go out shooting. But, for goodness sake, don't give the show away, and make me a laughing stock amongst the other fellows. I can imagine Walker's or Rennie's face, when they got to hear I put any faith in such things. My dear girl! I should never be able to face them."

"Never fear. Only you and I shall keep the secret between us; and when you have at last shot enough tigers to satisfy you, and decide to shoot no more, we can tell the others how it has been done."

"Whatever I may think of the matter, I know you and old Bairagi Gond will soon be ascribing supernatural powers to me. The old fellow was awfully impressed with to-day's performance, and prophesies wonderful deeds to be yet done by me in the shikar line."

"Yes, I am sure you will find that Bairagi and I are right in the end."

"What say you to this plan of making a fortune? After a few more successful tests of its potency, we hire it out at a thousand rupees a day to swagger tiger shooting parties. We should then easily be able to get off Home on furlough next year, instead of having to wait another five long years owing to our very slender purse. Sleek Rajahs and wealthy Globe Trotters would not think a tiger expensive at a thousand rupees!"

"Tom, you are incorrigible. I refuse to listen to such sacrilege. Just before we came out to camp I read a book on the psychology of the Oriental, and the different superstitions that run through the lives of the Eastern races. It was quite interesting, and I found myself deeply impressed by the marvellous things and wizardry the author wrote about. I quite agreed with him that there was no explanation for some of the mysterious things he had seen. Black Magic is the only expressive term that can be applied to many of these mysterious rites and doings in which the natives of the East place absolute faith and credence, but which to ordinary European eyes appears to be mere necromancy and twaddle. You have been in India, Tom, long enough I am sure to have seen some of this in the lives of the natives, for I have often heard you say that some of these conjurers were clever enough to impress the ordinary layman that they had dealings with the Devil himself."

"I must look up that book when I get back to headquarters. Come along, tea is ready, and I am longing for a nice sandwich and a glorious cup of tea, which I have never known any one make as well as you do."

The following day was to be given up to office work and inspection of the records and work of his police outpost, but Kennedy ordered Bairagi to tie up a young buffalo as bait on that and the following nights, for the pair of tigers that had been marked down in a belt of forest bordering a small stream, two miles from camp.

A "kill" was reported on the second day, and tracks, Bairagi said, showed both tigers had eaten of the carcass, and were at present lying up in the patch of evergreen

bushes on the banks of the stream. "The Huzur's luck is good, and both the tigers will eat the saheb's bullets before the day is over. I go at once to collect the beaters. All will be ready by midday."

True to his word, Bairagi arrived as the Kennedys were finishing their breakfast, and announced everything was ready for the beat, and said it was time they started, as the tigress was a cunning and restless beast, and might move off. It did not take the Kennedys long to reach the spot on their horses, and they found the all important and pomp^r Nur Khan awaiting them, in charge of the party of beater who sat and lay around in the shade, eager to start work.

The usual, but very important business of putting up the stops was gone through, and after Bairagi had seen the saheb and his lady up in their *machan*, he went off with a confident air to bring up the beat. Nur Khan would look after one flank of the line of men whilst the other would be his personal care.

This was a simple and easy beat, with one flank protected by the stream, which no tiger would attempt to cross openly within sight of the men; the other was bounded by a stretch of open country, sparsely covered with low grass. The occupants of the *machan* were accordingly not surprised, shortly after the commencement of the beat, to see a large male tiger making slowly in their direction, and cleverly kept in the proper path by the stops. It was an easy matter to drop him in his tracks as he unsuspiciously came level with the *machan*.

The tigress, however, turned out not to be at home, and investigation after the beat was over disclosed the fact that she had become restless and suspicious, and crossed over the stream and lain up on the opposite bank before the beat started. It was only one of those interventions of luck, so commonly met with in the jungles, against which there is no fighting, and Tom Kennedy knew this too well to grouse. He felt, he had nothing to complain about. Tigers, he knew well, were not such easy animals to bring to bag, and he acknowledged to himself that he

had experienced better luck during his short stay at Hindupur than he had known for any similar period before.

"Well? Oh sceptical one? What have you to say now of the old shikari's charm?" inquired his wife on their return home.

"Coincidence, dear. Coincidence combined with a little luck, and nothing else," replied her husband.

"Oh! Tom. How can you be so grudging in your acknowledgment of your sure conversion to my ideas? Why! You know you have never done so ~~well~~ before. Come, hand over that dear little quill to my safe keeping. It will yet make a great shikari of you."

Urgent work put an end to further shooting excursions during the remainder of their stay at Hindupur, and the camp moved on without any more tigers being bagged to other places in the district that needed the Superintendent's presence.

It would serve no purpose to follow Kennedy through his tour, or to recount the great success he had with tiger and other dangerous game, whenever met with. Tiger after tiger fell to his rifle, and as the hot weather began to make itself felt, he closed his tour and went into the station. Tents were folded and put away, and rifles with a final dressing of oil were laid to rest in their cases, whilst their owner settled down to pass the long hot months as best he could till November again ushered in the crisp cool mornings of the next winter.

Rennie, the Deputy Commissioner of Yellowpur, had already come in. He was a great and experienced sportsman, especially after tiger, and his record for the winter months had never yet been beaten by any of the other officials of the station. He was therefore astounded to see the trophies his Superintendent of Police had obtained; in numbers and quality, his winter's bag was not in it compared with that secured by Tom Kennedy. Rennie was too good a sportsman to be jealous of another's success, and was the first to congratulate him on his bag. He jokingly inquired if Kennedy had gone through the

course recommended by many Gond shikaris for becoming a fearless and successful tiger slayer.

" You know, old fellow, most Gond shikaris keep a stock of dried tiger's liver, and pound it up, and eat a pinch of it with their food before starting out on a tiger hunt. They say this is a certain tonic for the nerves, and imbues them with the courage and cunning of the animal they are after. Has any redoubtable Gond shikari taken you under his wing, and been dosing you with the specific ? "

Kennedy turned the conversation with a laugh, and though by now he was no longer incredulous of the efficacy of the charm he carried about with him, he yet felt any reference to it would call forth nothing but chaff from his companions and friends.

Young Walker, his assistant, who had not yet bagged his tiger, never tired of asking for and listening to some of Kennedy's little adventures. He was highly delighted when Kennedy promised him a week's stay with his camp, next November, and guaranteed to get him a tiger during that period.

The hot weather slowly dragged through its uneventful course in quiet little Yellowpur. The officials, who were its only residents, passed the time, as best they could. There was always tennis and bridge to be had in the evenings at the club after the long hours in their respective offices. A few short and trying trips on duty to places out in the district had to be made when personal supervision and inspection was necessary. Guns and rifles, however, were carefully stored away, and played no part in these outings.

It was only when October had half slipped by, that a certain freshness in the air began to be felt in the early mornings, and the grass could be seen sparkling with dew. Yellowpur began to wake up and feel that at last the heat was a thing of the past, and a few pleasurable months were in sight.

Fans, that had been waving ceaselessly throughout the past dreadful months, were stopped, and the green lawns in front of the different offices began to be dotted about

with snow white and comfortable looking tents that were being put up for an airing and the usual annual overhaul, preparatory to being brought into use for the approaching camping season. All who were keen on shooting brought out their guns and favourite rifles for a good cleaning after the musty rains.

The conversation at the club began to turn to such subjects as, a flight of blue-winged teal having been seen on the jhil just outside the station, or the prospects of jungle-fowl shooting being extra good that year. Rennie said that he had flushed a good few snipe that morning as he strolled round another jhil on a tour of inspection.

"Give them a fortnight, and then, Kennedy, we shall have a grand day at them. The first of the season, remember, old man. The Tehsildar of Bargaon has reported the presence of a tiger in those jungles that has been doing a lot of damage to cattle. Another surly brute is said to have taken up his quarters near Lakpura, and to show very little respect for the cowherds, taking his pick from their herds in spite of attempts to keep him off. Will toss you for these tigers. Heads for Bargaon, and tails for Lakpura."

"Right O! Throw up a coin. By Jove! Just what I wanted. Bargaon for you, and the surly Lakpura brute for me. I really don't want the beast for myself, but intend getting him bagged by young Walker, whom I have promised a tiger."

"By the way, Kennedy, it is my turn for Hindupur first this year. You can take it later on. Hope I have the same luck as you had last winter. Old Bairagi Gond has sent in word through the patel, that he has three tigers marked down, and ready to be shot by any of us that care to go round there next month."

"You are welcome to the three. I have a few other spots up my sleeve, that my Inspectors report hold tiger."

October slipped through quite pleasantly, and Rennie was the first to move into camp, bound for Bargaon. He was followed a week later by the Kennedys, accompanied by young Walker as a guest for ten days, after which he

would have to go on to those parts of the district which his superior officer would not find time to inspect that winter. Tom Kennedy rightly thought the bold and surly tiger of Lakpura would be as easy as any other for his young assistant to bag. He knew well that the animal that showed least fear of man would prove an easier beast to find and kill than one of a sneaking and cunning disposition; and he was determined that Walker should start with this tiger.

He was by now a thorough convert and believer in the little charm, and had formed a plan by which he could further test its possibilities. So, on the day of their arrival at Lakpura, he disclosed this plan to his wife, and asked her assistance in carrying it out.

“Dear, on the day we get our “kill” by the big tiger, and before we start out for the beat, I want you to somehow get hold of young Walker’s sun helmet, and inserting the little quill into the soft pith of which it is made, to cleverly conceal it under the cloth cover of the hat, so that Walker will not suspect its presence. It will be quite interesting, don’t you think, to try its powers in this way? For my part, I feel positive it will bring luck to its wearer. You can recover it, the first opportunity you get after the beat.”

Mrs. Kennedy quite entered into the spirit of the affair, but said she would not agree to her husband taking any part in the sport that day, as the little talisman, she said, would be with another. To this condition Tom Kennedy agreed, as there was no other way out of it, and he saw how seriously his wife took the matter.

“Very well, dear, I shall not go to the beat, and shall plead an urgent call to the scene of a suspected crime, a few miles away, and ask Walker to excuse me. Everything is cut and dried for him, and the local shikari knows his work well enough for my presence not to be absolutely necessary.”

As confidently expected, after a couple of days the tiger was reported to have killed the young buffalo so temptingly tied out for him by the local shikari. Tulshi

reported everything ready for the beat by midday, and both he and Walker were greatly disappointed to hear Kennedy state he could not accompany them as he had to ride out to a small village, called Kansapur, three miles away, as a small dacoity was suspected to have occurred there.

"You will be all right, Walker. Tulshi has arranged everything nicely for you. Wish you luck, my boy. Remember, should you only wound the tiger, on no account follow up; but return to camp and wait for me. I shall not be away long, and shall go out with you, and help to bring him in."

Putting on his helmet, in which the little quill and its contents had been neatly inserted by Mrs. Kennedy as soon as news of the "kill" had come in, Walker rode cheerfully off for the beat. Just to clear his conscience for the little deception he had practised on his friend, Kennedy also mounted, and cantered off for Kansapur.

The grand old tiger was duly driven up to Walker's *machan*, cleverly kept in the right direction by the stops on either hand. It was an easy shot, but the hand that held the rifle was unsteady, due to the intense excitement of its owner, and the beast, that should have fallen in its tracks at the shot, with a heavy stumble and quick recovery floundered off and reached the heavy coverts behind the *machan*.

Hit hard with a .500 expanding bullet just a trifle too far back, it was not possible for him to survive long. Anyway, he was decidedly a dangerous beast to follow up immediately after being wounded, and though the young sportsman was keen and eager to be after him, the shikaris hung back and held a whispered conversation among themselves.

"The saheb was young, and the tiger was well known to be an extremely surly and savage brute. Had the 'burra saheb' been there, matters would have been different, and they would have followed and stood by him. What wonderful tales they had heard of his shooting powers and pluck. No! It would be courting disaster to

enter that thick cover now. To-morrow, they would look up the Shaitan."

This caution and reluctance to follow up on the part of his men suddenly made Walker remember the promise he had given Kennedy to return to camp and wait for his assistance before trying to retrieve any wounded tiger. So putting half a dozen men up different trees around the patch of jungle to note if the wounded animal left the cover, he rode back to camp, and, to his surprise, found Kennedy already back and waiting for news of the beat.

"Got him, I bet. Tell me all about it."

"No such luck, my dear fellow. Muffed the whole business, and ended by only wounding him, though I rather think mortally."

After hearing all details of the beat, Kennedy did his best to cheer the young fellow up.

"It is all right, Walker. Don't worry. We will bring that tiger in safely. There is no hurry; give him just a little time, and after our tea we shall look him up together."

With this Walker had to be content, and he felt more hopeful on noticing the confidence of the older and more experienced sportsman. He waited with what patience he could till his friend was ready to start out, and then full of eagerness he rode out with him to the cover in which the tiger had disappeared after being wounded. Both men strolled round the patch, and were relieved to hear from the men who had been posted there by Walker that the wounded animal had not left the cover. Kennedy noticed this cover consisted of a long narrow strip of fairly heavy jungle, and that the natural lead out of it by a tiger under these circumstances was by a small *nullah* to the west. Here he posted Walker, with instructions to keep a good look out, whilst he went through the cover with half a dozen men at his back, and either drove the beast towards Walker, or shot it himself, if come across under favourable conditions.

He was on the point of leaving his friend, when he suddenly remembered the promise he had given his wife

before sallying out, that somehow he would regain possession of the mascot before entering the jungle to hunt up the wounded tiger. Mrs. Kennedy had not been able to find an opportunity, before the men started out, of recovering it herself, but had insisted that her husband could only go after the wounded animal if he had it in his possession.

Kennedy consequently found himself in rather a dilemma, but he was quite equal to the occasion. He knew there was not the remotest chance of the wounded beast going past Walker. If it was still alive, it would put up a fight to the bitter end, and he felt himself competent, guarded by his mascot, to see the matter through, if unhampered by an inexperienced though keen sportsman at his elbow. If dead, as he strongly suspected, he would pick it up easily. Anyway, his promise to his wife, to regain possession of the little charm, would have to be kept.

Turning to Walker, he said, "You will have the sun at your back. Let us change hats; your's will be a better protection for my eyes as I have to face the sun when driving the wounded brute towards you."

Walker cheerfully made the exchange, and Kennedy started off for the other end of the strip of jungle in which the tiger was known to be lying. Getting to the spot, where blood tracks showed the wounded beast had entered the cover, Tom Kennedy with a solitary Gond at his back, carrying his spare rifle, cautiously stepped into it. After proceeding barely fifty yards, the tiger was pointed out by the Gond, lying dead under some dense and overhanging foliage of a low bush. It was what Kennedy had expected, and he was pleased that Walker had finished off the beast without any help from him. A loud coo-e-e or two brought the impatient and expectant Walker speedily to the spot. It is difficult to depict the satisfaction in his face, as he stood and gloated over the magnificent trophy he had at last secured. The elder sportsman's satisfaction was equally great, for he felt his greatest reward lay in the pleasure he had been able to give his young companion.

"Congratulations, old chap. You have done remarkably well. Considering this was your first tiger, your shot was quite a good one. Just three inches further forward in the shoulder, and you would have dropped him like a stone."

Mrs. Kennedy greeted them on their return, and was just as pleased as either of the men with the luck they had experienced.

"You have done quite well, Mr. Walker, and have bagged a splendid specimen. It is a beauty, and let's hope, the forerunner of many more to fall to your rifle."

"Well, what do you think of the old woman's charm now?" said Mrs. Kennedy to her husband, when they were alone together. "I have taken it out of Mr. Walker's hat, and have got it safely stowed away."

"Extraordinary is the only word which can express my opinion. Walker has been trying for over two years, and never yet got a tiger, and I should not be surprised if it took him another two years to get his second. He is a good sort, and as keen as mustard, but, after all you know, that alone will not help him to bag tigers. Experience and lessons learnt from one's failures are the only sure roads to success in tiger shooting, and I am afraid Walker has lots to learn yet."

After a few more enjoyable days with his friends, during which only some small game was bagged, Walker went on his tour to other parts of his district, whilst the Kennedys continued theirs.

The end of the cold weather tour again saw the Superintendent of Police with a fine collection of trophies when he settled down for the hot months in quiet and dull Yellowpur, and we shall not follow him during the next ten years in his wanderings and postings to different stations in the Province, nor give any account of his successful outings after game. It is sufficient to say that he became known throughout the province as a great and successful tiger slayer.

II

However keen Kennedy had been on the sport formerly, his appetite for tiger shooting was fairly well satiated by now, and he seldom went out of his way to try for a tiger unless it was reported to be an exceptionally hard and cunning one to bring to bag. Promotion and the consequent increase of office work and responsibilities were contributory reasons for this lack of keenness, although he was stationed now at Mustypur, which was known by all to be an exceptionally good tiger district.

He was in the midst of his long winter tour, when he received a letter from his Deputy Commissioner, to the effect that Lord B—— who was touring India would shortly be coming to the district for a small tiger shoot.

Watson wrote saying he would like Kennedy to take up the arrangements for giving the distinguished visitor a good shoot. He wrote—"You are a famous tiger slayer, and I should be awfully obliged if you would in conjunction with Kishen Chand, our Indian Forest Officer, do the 'bundobust,' and give Lord B—— a tiger or two. K. C. does not shoot himself, and knows still less about shooting camps, but he will put the resources of his Department at your disposal. Remember, old man, your reputation is at stake, as well as that of our district. Call on me for what help you want."

"What a dreadful nuisance!" said Kennedy, as he handed the letter over to his wife to read. "Anyhow, dear, I suppose I must do my best, and act as head shikari, and find and trot out the tigers."

"Oh! Tom. I think it is a feather in your cap, and if you can get Lord B—— a tiger or two it may mean promotion for you," replied practical Mrs. Kennedy. "He has a lot of influence, both at Home and out here. And after all, dear, that little charm has never yet failed you, and if Lord B—— turns out to be a poor shot, we might try the same plan with him as we did with young Mr. Walker, when you got him his first tiger."

The next two weeks was a busy time for Tom Kennedy, collecting information about all the likely and probable tigers in the jungles, and making elaborate arrangements with Kishen Chand for feeding and marking down the royal game he was out to provide for Lord B—.

By the time a letter reached him from Watson saying Lord B— had arrived and would be setting out next day for Hathinagar, which had been fixed upon as the shooting base, everything was ready, and no less than six tigers had been marked down. These had been fed regularly on young buffalo calves, and were practically tied down in their respective patches of forest, waiting and on the look out for their next feeds.

The camp had been picturesquely pitched under some nice shady trees, along the banks of a pretty little stream. A couple of elephants were to be seen picketed close by for the use of the sportsmen during their excursions in the forests. Every little detail had been looked to, and there was nothing wanting to make the camp self-supporting and as comfortable as possible.

Lord B—, accompanied by a friend and Watson, the Deputy Commissioner, arrived in due course next day in a couple of fine cars, and were highly delighted with the arrangements that had been made for their comfort and with the prospects of sport, which Kennedy informed them could not be brighter. Six young buffaloes had been tied out nightly, and for the last three mornings no less than two "kills" had been reported.

Over their wine and dessert, that night, the members of the camp formed a jovial and happy party, as is always the case in India when good sportsmen meet together. It was late when the party broke up and retired to their respective tents; Lord B—, no doubt, to dream of the grand tigers that Kennedy had promised to trot out before him.

As Kennedy tumbled into bed, he noticed his wife inspecting their little mascot lovingly. She had taken it out for a last look at it before it was wanted for the

morrow, and her hand shook as she fondled the queer little affair.

"Fail me not little charm to-morrow, and keep Tom safe and bring him luck," she said, as she put it down on her dressing table and went to bed. Tom was sleeping quietly and restfully. He had nothing to worry him, as he knew the tigers would be forthcoming on the morrow, and he would have his mascot with him as he sallied out for the beats.

Whilst enjoying their morning cup of tea, the party saw the shikaris, who had been out to inspect the baits, drop in one by one with their reports. Two "kills" had occurred during the night, and orders had already gone forth to collect the beaters. The *machans* were ready, and all that was wanted was to give the tigers a little time to settle down for the day, after their heavy gorging on buffalo beef.

Tom Kennedy was in cheerful mood, and busy hustling matters along, and it was not till ten o'clock in the morning, a few minutes before the sportsmen would have to set out, that he felt he could allow himself a small rest. He strolled round to his tent to see what his wife was doing with herself.

"Good gracious! dear, what has happened to you? You look as though you had seen a ghost," he said as he caught sight of her. "You are looking dreadfully ill and upset."

"Tom, dear, I am very upset. The charm has disappeared, and though I have rummaged all the drawers and boxes in the tent, I cannot find it. I distinctly remember leaving it on my dressing table last night as I went to bed. I have had the tent turned upside down, and still have not come across it. What will you do, dear, without it? I was a silly old woman to have taken it out last night. I can never forgive myself."

Though greatly upset, himself, Tom Kennedy did his best to soothe the distress he so plainly noticed his wife was suffering from, and told her, it would not matter

much as he was not shooting himself, but only directing the beats.

"The thing will turn up later on. It cannot have disappeared altogether. No one would steal it, as it looked and is valueless to all but those who know its secret."

Mrs. Kennedy, however, was not to be consoled. She had a premonition of some disaster and, woman like, tried to dissuade her husband from going out that morning. He was endeavouring to show her how impossible it was for him to stay away, when Watson's voice was heard outside their tent.

"Hurry up, Kennedy, we are all waiting for our head shikari. The elephants are ready, and Lord B—— has already mounted."

With a kiss and a word of cheer, Kennedy hurried out of the tent, leaving his wife in a dreadfully distressed and nervous state of mind.

The first beat of the day had a very successful termination, and a fine tigress fell to Lord B——'s rifle. The party then moved on to the jungle in which the other "kill" had occurred. Shortly after the commencement of the beat, a large male tiger was afoot, but he proved to have a nasty temper and refused to be driven docilely in the direction he was wanted to go. He was noisy and threatening towards the beaters, and eventually a shikari came round and reported that the men were disinclined to push him, as he was intimidating them by short angry charges.

Tom Kennedy, who was in the same *machan* with Lord B——, told him that he would go round and support the beaters, and he had no doubt a judicious shot or two in the air would hustle the crusty old beast along. Getting down from the *machan*, he got the beaters into line again and, taking up a position in the centre of the line, he fired a couple of shots into the air, and shortly after was rewarded by hearing the report of Lord B——'s rifle.

He only heard later on that it was a badly timed shot, and should have been held over for just the few seconds required to allow the animal to come level with the *machan*.

when it would have rushed out of the beat. As it was, the shot had been taken at the wrong moment, and only sent the infuriated and wounded beast back with a terrific roar on the line of beaters. The natives were quick to realize this, and with their wonderful agility were safely up trees before the wounded animal reached them. Tom Kennedy, however, paid the price of Lord B——'s unlucky shot, and though he threw up his gun and fired hastily at the maddened brute as it rushed open-mouthed at him, he was unable to stop it. The next second he was down, and the animal had passed on.

There was a great hush in the forest for a few seconds following the report of his gun, and then a great clamour of voices broke out. Watson, who understood the language well, clambered off his *machan* and, shouting to Lord B—— that an accident had occurred to Kennedy, ran with his rifle for the spot from where he heard a murmur of excited voices proceeding.

“ My God ! What has happened Kennedy ? ” he asked, as he came up and found his friend, held up in a sitting position by some of the natives, with his back against the trunk of a tree.

“ Just a bit of bad luck and bad shooting. The brute got me, Watson, but I hope not badly.”

Saying this, Kennedy swooned off. Lord B—— and his friend had arrived by now, and after a quick examination of Kennedy’s wounds had been made, these were immediately washed out with water from their thermos flasks, and hastily bandaged up with strips torn from Watson’s shirt. A serviceable stretcher was improvised out of bamboos, and the wounded man gently placed on it was carried by four bearers towards the camp. Hastily mounting a horse on which the patel had ridden out to the beat, Watson rode off ahead to prepare Mrs. Kennedy for the arrival of her husband. “ What a dreadfully disagreeable errand I have before me,” thought Watson to himself. “ Poor Mrs. Kennedy. It might have been worse however, and it is marvellous to me how Kennedy got off so lightly. We must get him into headquarters at once. McLeod is a

clever chap, and may pull him through, if only we get him into his hands in time."

Mrs. Kennedy was standing outside her tent as Watson reached the camp, and the bearer of the sad news was surprised to note, from the set and calm expression on her face, that she must somehow have divined what had occurred. She walked up to his pony before he could dismount.

"Is Tom dead? Tell me the worst, Mr. Watson."

Poor Watson was greatly taken aback by this, and felt himself stammering and at a loss for words as he replied, "Dear Mrs. Kennedy, nothing so dreadful has occurred. Tom has been mauled, but not so seriously that Colonel McLeod will not be able to put him right. We must get him into headquarters as soon as possible. Will you please pack up what you require to take with you, so that we may start off as soon as possible after his arrival. He should be here in a quarter of an hour's time. Lord B—— and his friend are with him."

Without saying a word, she quietly entered her tent and, going to their medicine chest, got together the antiseptics and dressings which she knew would be required, and then sat down to await the arrival of her husband. She was surprised at her own calmness, and wondered how it was she could take things so coolly. She forgot that it was the life she had led so long in India, where she was for months at a time far from any medical aid, and where accidents were of common occurrence, that had made her rely so much on herself, and like hundreds of English women in India, a land of sudden illness and death, she had acquired an elementary knowledge of nursing, and also become quite a good amateur doctor.

It seemed an eternity to the grief-stricken woman, but really it was only fifteen minutes, before her husband was brought in. She bent over the stretcher, and saw he was conscious, and in the first exchange of looks between husband and wife, each read instinctively the thoughts of the other. Both seemed to say by their eyes, "if only that

little charm had not been lost, this would never have occurred."

"Don't worry, dear. I shall be all right very soon," were the first words he said, as he was gently lifted on to his bed. Mrs. Kennedy at once cut away the clothes over his wounds, and, untying the hastily tied bandages, washed them out with strong antiseptics and bound them up again with her skilful hands.

By the time she had finished, the cars were ready for the road. Lord B——'s big and luxurious sedan had been converted into a comfortable ambulance, and her husband was carried into it and well padded around with cushions to break the jar of the road. She sat beside him, whilst Watson took the wheel himself.

It was a good sixty miles to Mustypur, and the only halt on the road was one of five minutes at a big village that boasted of a telegraph office, to allow of an urgent message being despatched to McLeod, the Civil Surgeon, to prepare him for their coming.

Watson drove fast and smoothly, and by evening they reached Mustypur, where McLeod promptly took over the damaged man. A room had been got ready for him, and another for Mrs. Kennedy in the Civil Surgeon's own house. A thorough examination of the wounds was gone through again and, after treatment of his patient, the Colonel took Mrs. Kennedy aside and congratulated her on the way she had applied first aid to her husband.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Kennedy, we will pull your husband through all right. There is not much to fear from the wound on his shoulder, made by the tiger as it struck him down; it is only the two deep holes above his knee, caused by the animal's fangs, that will require watching and careful treatment. Of course, there has been a great shock to the system, but with your husband's constitution, he should get over that easily. I have wired for two nurses from Bombay, and they should arrive by the midday train to-morrow. Now take my advice and have a couple of hours rest, as you will be required to sit by him to-night. It

is such a pity my wife is away at Home, otherwise she could have been very useful to-night and helped you."

The Colonel had a reputation of being a very clever doctor and surgeon, and Mrs. Kennedy felt happier, now she had got her husband into his hands, and more so to hear him speak so confidently of pulling him through. She was worn out with anxiety and the long strain on her nerves, and, as her husband was sleeping peacefully under the influence of some medicine he had been given, she threw herself on her bed, and in a few moments deep restful sleep came to her aid.

Waking after a couple of hours, she hurried to her husband's room, to find the Colonel sitting by the bedside of his patient, who was now restless and tossing about in the delirium of fever. The Colonel told her not to be upset and frightened, as this fever was only what was to be expected after the great shock the patient had gone through. He said there were no bad symptoms yet, and her husband would calm down again shortly, and he hoped, have a good night, all things considered. He stayed by Kennedy till past midnight and only, when exhaustion threw the patient into a deep sleep, did he leave the room for a short rest himself, telling Mrs. Kennedy to call him any time she felt anxious.

The long night dragged through its course, and was like a nightmare to the poor tortured woman, sitting and watching by the sick man's bed. Shortly after dawn she was relieved by the Colonel, whose Indian assistant from the local hospital had also arrived. Presently Watson and Lord B——, with troubled and anxious faces, arrived in a car to inquire of Kennedy's condition, and were asked into the doctor's study, to there await the result of the morning's inspection of the patient.

Shortly after McLeod entered, and the two men, who had been joined by Mrs. Kennedy, saw from the worried and troubled expression in his face, that things were not going too well.

"Mrs. Kennedy, your husband's condition is no worse, but do not be upset when I tell you that I do not like the

look of the wounds in his leg. They are not doing as well as I should like, and I am sorry to say, unless there is some improvement by this evening, the leg will have to be amputated. Don't take it so seriously, my dear Mrs. Kennedy, and remember I can only save his life at the expense of his leg. It is a simple operation, and he will be out of all danger, once it is removed."

She felt stunned and sick, and all she could say was, "Oh! Colonel McLeod give him till to-morrow morning; just a small further chance; he may be better by the morning. It will kill Tom, when he sees what has happened. Only till to-morrow morning, Colonel McLeod. If no better by then, I shall have no further objection to your doing what you think necessary."

The Colonel thought deeply for a few minutes. "Very well, I think I can chance it. Another twelve hours will not make much difference, but be prepared for the worst. I cannot truthfully hold out any hopes of saving the leg."

All saw he was very distressed as he left the room, and Watson and Lord B—— did their best to cheer up Mrs. Kennedy, but, seeing how futile their efforts were, left the house in a very dejected and depressed mood.

Tom Kennedy lay on his bed, tossed with fever the livelong day, and though the nurses arrived from Bombay in response to the Civil Surgeon's telegram, it was little they could do to soothe the troubled and sick man. They sent word early in the night to his wife, that their patient was easier, and wanted to see her.

As she knelt down by the side of her husband's bed, he said to her, "My dear girl, don't be so upset. I know my leg has to go. What does it matter? We will go Home to the old country, and so long as you will not shudder at seeing your Tom going about on crutches, as he hobbles about attending to our spuds and cabbages, why! I shall be quite happy, and we shall enjoy our lives yet for many years. I have long had a yearning for a nice kitchen garden of our very own, and though it will be a bit of a knock, throwing up the service and my work, we shall get

on finely, far from tigers and the enchanting land of India."

The presence of his wife had a soothing effect on the wounded man, and presently he fell into a deep and peaceful sleep. She sat on by his side for hours, and at last, resting her arms on the bed, bowed her head on them; not to sleep, however, but only to think of the great calamity that had come into their lives. She found herself longing and praying for but one thing to be granted her, and strange as it may seem, her prayer was not for her husband's life but for the recovery of the lost mascot. If only that could be found, all would yet be well, she felt.

She went over and over again the events of that fateful night before the beat in which her husband had been mauled. "What could have happened to the little quill and its contents that night? Was it possible she had not left it on her dressing table, after all?"

Suddenly in a flash, recollection came to her tortured brain. She now remembered that during the night she had got up and gone to her dressing table, more asleep than awake, and taking up the little quill had slipped it into the cover of her favourite cushion that lay on a chair beside her bed. She had fallen asleep immediately, and by morning had forgotten all about her actions of the night.

She hurried out of the sick room into her own and, with shaky and unsteady fingers groped and felt about in the old cushion. "Good God! I thank Thee," she murmured, as her fingers came in contact with the well remembered shape, snug in one corner of the rough holland cover. She withdrew and kissed the little quill, the cause of all her trouble and unhappiness, and with faltering steps, as though in a dream, she carried it in her hand, straight to her husband's bedside.

As she placed it gently in the breast pocket of his sleeping suit, the wounded man opened his eyes, and smiled peacefully and contentedly up into her face; and shortly after sank into a healthful sleep.

On his entering the room the next morning, the Colonel found her exhausted but wide awake in a chair beside her

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